

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COLLEGE-CHOICE FACTORS OF NCAA
FOOTBALL STUDENT-ATHLETES AT A SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of
Exercise and Sport Science (Sport Administration)

Chapel Hill
2011

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ABSTRACT

LANDON T. HUFFMAN: A Comparative Analysis of the College-Choice Factors of NCAA Football Student-Athletes at a Southeastern University
(Under the direction of Coyte G. Cooper, Ph.D.)

It is important that collegiate athletic department personnel are aware of student-athletes' college-choice factors so they can recruit and retain student-athletes that enhance the brands of their sport programs, athletic department, and institution (Canale, 1996; Mixon, Trevino, & Minto, 2004). Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the college-choice factors of current NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) football players at a southeastern university ($N = 77$). Using a modified version of the Student-Athlete College-Choice Profile (Gabert, Hale, and Montalvo, 1999), the research utilized relationship marketing and branding theories to identify strategies to attract student-athletes who are a great fit for their program (Dumond, Lynch, & Platania, 2008; Kotler, 2004). Overall, the analysis illustrated that athletically-related college-choice components were rated most influential by the respondents. Therefore, it is vital that administrators use these results to educate their coaches regarding techniques to enhance efficiency within the recruiting process.

To my wife and best friend, Tabatha, for all of her love, patience, and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to give thanks to God for blessing me with the opportunity to pursue higher education at an esteemed university led by distinguished faculty and staff. Next I would like to thank my family for their persistent support and inspiration as I continue to chase my passion and contribute to the collegiate sport industry.

Equally important I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Coyte Cooper. His countless hours of guidance and mentorship have not only developed me as a student, but continue to empower me to be a future leader as well.

I am also indebted to a vast network of support that has not only contributed to the completion of my thesis, but also to my personal growth during my time in Chapel Hill. This includes my committee members Dr. Ed Shields and Dr. Deborah Stroman, additional sport administration faculty members Ms. Barbara Osborne, J.D., Ms. Deborah Southall, and Dr. Richard Southall, numerous Exercise and Sport Science faculty, including Ms. Cindy Atkins, Ms. Becca Battaglini, Dr. Diane Groff, Dr. Kevin Guskiewicz, Dr. Elizabeth Hedgpeth, Ms. Ashley McCullen, Dr. Jason Mihalik, Dr. Sherry Salyer, Mr. Michael Smith, and Ms. Amy Tufts, as well as several Athletic Department staff. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my classmates who have been invaluable resources in my life: Jack Daly, Danielle Gaynor, Kendra Hancock, Elizabeth Lancaster, Erin Lindsey, Ross Schwarzber, and Jordan Skolnick.

Thanks for leading by example, pursuing excellence, and embodying the Carolina Way.

Proverbs 3: 5-6

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each year, high school students from across the United States make crucial life decisions about the future direction of their lives. Students may choose to apply for a job, join a branch of the military service, or enroll in a post-secondary institution of higher education. Students that choose to enroll in a college or university are faced with additional choices regarding which institution to attend. Each aspiring collegiate student considers a variety of factors during the college-selection process, but prospective collegiate student-athletes are presented with a unique variety of college-choice factors that influence which institution they choose to attend (Adler & Adler, 1991; Konnert & Giese, 1987; Letawsky, 2003; Mathes & Gurney, 1985; Reynaud, 1998).

Colleges nationwide provide a multitude of opportunities and extracurricular activities for their student body, such as campus recreation activities (e.g., intramurals, club sports). Although campus recreation activities offer athletic opportunities for the student body, another common extracurricular privilege made available at most collegiate institutions is varsity athletics. Varsity student-athletes comprise a segment of the student body that supplies an inimitable and valuable service for their respective institution (Mixon, Trevino, & Minto, 2004; Toma & Cross, 1998). Furthermore, researchers have determined that the perception of a successful athletic department is instrumental for the overall enhancement of the institution for prospective students (Canale, 1996; Davis, 1975). As a result, successful

athletic departments provide value for their university that few other institutional entities are capable of replicating (Fulks, 2009).

To better understand the current culture of college sport in the United States, it is necessary to become familiar with the model of American college sport. College athletic departments are usually members of an athletic association, whose purpose is to create and enforce procedures and rules in which all members are committed to abide. There are two primary intercollegiate athletic associations in the United States: the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). In 1905, the NCAA was instituted to address player safety concerns as well as ensure that a centralized governing body was in place to oversee consistent playing rules. Currently the NCAA is the largest intercollegiate athletic association, comprised of approximately 1,055 active volunteer member institutions (NCAA Composition, 2010). Although the NCAA's rules, bylaws, and legislation have evolved since 1905, according to Article 1.3.1 of the NCAA Division I Constitution, the Basic Purpose includes the following:

The competitive athletics programs of member institutions are designed to be a vital part of the educational system. A basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body and, by so doing, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and the professional sports (NCAA Division I Manual, 2009, p. 1; The History, 2010).

Furthermore, the primary mission of NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics is “to integrate intercollegiate athletics into higher education so that the educational experience of the student-athlete is paramount,” which is supported by Bylaw 2.9 which states,

“...[Student-athletes’] participation should be motivated primarily by education” (2009-2010 NCAA Division I Manual, p. 4; Our Mission, 2010, para. 2).

However, as the culture of intercollegiate sport in America has evolved, a perceived fundamental dualism between academic and athletic success has arisen at the core of the student-athlete experience, particularly in “big-time” college sport (Toma & Cross, 1998). For example, the rampant commercialization (e.g., multi-billion dollar media contracts and multimillion dollar coaching salaries, facilities, athletic booster donations) prevalent in the NCAA’s most competitive subdivision, known as the Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), puts additional pressure on athletic directors and coaches to win and fuels the perception that winning, not the pursuit of educational attainment, is valued most (Zimbalist, 1999). The pressure to succeed in the playing arena could potentially result in actions and decisions that would compromise their respective institution’s academic integrity (Zimbalist). As a result, it is understandable that athletic administrators and coaching staffs can find themselves in a predicament when recruiting prospective student-athletes for their institution and sport, respectively. In lieu of the debate of an athletic department’s role in an institution of higher education, this study examined if football student-athletes are more influenced to attend a college based on academic, athletic, or other external factors.

In response to the growing commercialization and multiple scandals in college athletics, the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (Knight Commission) was founded in 1989 with the focus of making recommendations to reform college athletics. At its core, the Knight Commission’s mission is to encourage colleges to pursue academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and institutional accountability (Mission and Statement of Principles, 2010). Since 1989, the Knight Commission has published two major

reports, *Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete* in 1991 and *A Call to Action* in 2001, which details suggestions regarding reform in college athletics (Mission and Statement of Principles, 2010). Additionally, the Knight Commission has outlined a series of organizational principles known as their Statement of Principles. Of the ten principles articulated by the Knight Commission, the third principle has a specific charge to intercollegiate athletic administrators, as reflected in the following quote:

The welfare, health and safety of student-athletes are primary concerns of athletics administration on this campus. This institution will provide student-athletes with the opportunity for academic experiences as close as possible to the experiences of their classmates (Mission and Statement of Principles, 2010).

True to this commitment, collegiate athletic administrators have the obligation to ensure that each student-athlete achieves their optimal personal development (e.g., educational attainment, athletic skills growth, leadership development, character building, communication skills, time management, teamwork lessons, life skills) during his or her years of athletic eligibility.

Although there are many complexities and moving parts associated with “big time” college sport, research indicates that fielding successful teams offer multiple tangible and intangible benefits for the university (Mixon, Trevino, & Minto, 2004). For example, successful athletic teams are associated with boosting athletic department revenue (Fulks, 2009). Also, Mixon et al. suggests that varsity athletics not only enhances the overall educational experience of the student-athlete, but the entire student body population as well. Research by Toma and Cross (1998) concluded that “significant success in intercollegiate athletics and the positive attention it produces has an influence in college student choice,

particularly at the search stage when students submit college applications” (p. 657). They also discuss that “championship seasons [in football and men’s basketball] may influence predisposition in making certain students...aware of higher education from an early age” (p. 657).

In addition, it is reasonable to assume that an increase in the quantity of admission applications results in an increase in the caliber of students admitted. Consequently, recruiting national championship caliber players can ultimately increase the revenue, exposure, notoriety, and reputation of a college (Fulks, 2009; Mathes & Gurney, 1985). In fact, investigators Mathes and Gurney (1985) comment that, “because the athletic record is identified with the prestige of the university, acquiring ‘blue chip’ athletes through active recruitment is a major concern of university coaches” (pp. 327-328). Therefore, colleges have a vested interest in ensuring that their athletic department is successful both on and off the field. In order to help build successful sports programs, athletic administrators must first hire coaches that are a great fit for their athletic department. Once a foundation is developed by employing great staff members, coaches can recruit and enroll student-athletes that are the best fit for their sport program. To assist administrators and coaches with collegiate recruiting, it is necessary to examine the factors that influence student-athletes’ college-selection process.

As alluded to earlier, athletics, particularly revenue sports such as football and men’s basketball, garner national visibility as the metaphorical front porch of the university. Recognizing that the public’s perception of the university’s brand is subject to bias based on athletic success, FBS athletic departments can be victims of a potential identity crisis regarding their primary role in an institution of higher learning. Consequently, collegiate

athletic administrators must evaluate and intentionally develop the brand identity of their individual sport programs and athletic department, valuing the significance of their role as an extension of the brand of their respective university (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Lawlor, 1998).

However, the brand of an institution's athletic department is dependent on the quality of its administrative staff, coaches, and student-athletes. Accordingly, it is important that collegiate athletic administrators are aware of student-athletes' college-choice factors so that collegiate athletic administrators can better serve and enhance their student-athletes, coaches, athletic department, and institution (Davis, 1975; Mixon, Trevino, & Minto, 2004). Moreover, it is mutually beneficial if both the school and the student-athlete are a great fit for one another (Canale, 1996).

Thus, the purpose of the current research was to examine the college-choice factors of Division I football student-athletes to assist with determining strategies to encourage best fit principles in the recruiting process. The research utilized theories of brand identity, relationship marketing, and human capital to guide the discussion of the most influential college-choice factors of college student-athletes (Dumond, Lynch, & Platania, 2008; Kotler, 2004; Lawlor, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Colleges that are highly visible in the national media are exceptionally susceptible to the competing dualism of academic integrity and athletic winning. Therefore, analyzing the factors that student-athletes considered when selecting which school to attend will offer valuable recruiting information for collegiate athletic administrators, the coaches that administrators hire, and the student-athletes that coaches recruit. An examination of the

college-choice factors of NCAA Division I FBS football student-athletes will help with developing an intentional brand identity as well as determine strategies to encourage best fit principles in the recruiting process.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the most influential college-choice factors among current NCAA Division I FBS football players at a southeastern university. This study surveyed all enrolled football players who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement concluding the college-selection process and who actively participated during the 2010 training camp at the university.

Research Questions

Based on a review of the related literature, the following research questions were created to guide the research:

[RQ 1] During the college-selection process, what were the most influential college-choice components of NCAA Division I FBS football players at a southeastern university who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement?

[RQ 2] During the college-selection process, what were the most influential college-choice components when focusing on the [2A, 2B, 2C] of NCAA Division I FBS football players at a southeastern university who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement?

[2A] Ethnicity (Black vs. White)

[2B] Residency status (in-state vs. out-of-state)

[2C] Football position (offense vs. defense)

[RQ 3] Are there significant differences between independent samples within each of the college-choice components when focusing on the [3A, 3B, 3C] of NCAA Division I FBS football players at a southeastern university who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement?

[3A] Ethnicity (Black vs. White)

[3B] Residency status (in-state vs. out-of-state)

[3C] Football position (offense vs. defense)

[RQ 4] During the college-selection process, what were the most influential college-choice factors of NCAA Division I FBS football players at a southeastern university who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement?

Definition of Terms

- *Athletic Grant-in-Aid* (synonymous with “Athletic Scholarship”): a one-year renewable agreement awarded within the guidelines established by the NCAA. Grants-in-aid may be full or partial and are awarded for a period not exceeding one year. “A full grant-in-aid is financial aid that consists of tuition, fees, room, board, and required course-related books” (2009-2010 NCAA Division I Manual, p. 173).
- *Athletic Scholarship Agreement* (ASA): An official form from the college (endorsed by the athletic conference and NCAA) that offers a prospective student-athlete an athletic grant-in-aid. Once the recruit signs an athletic scholarship agreement, the college is committed to funding aid, as detailed in the agreement, to the student-athlete once he or she enrolls in the institution (refer to Appendix A for a sample ASA).
- *Football Bowl Subdivision* (FBS): Formerly known as NCAA Division I-A, the Football Bowl Subdivision is a subdivision of NCAA Division I comprised of members which

meet specific membership qualifications, such as average attendance requirements, to be eligible for membership. Also, the FBS is the most competitive subdivision for intercollegiate athletic competition. Additional requirements can be found in the 2009-2010 NCAA Division I Manual (pp. 313-315, 317).

- *Football Championship Subdivision (FCS)*: Formerly known as NCAA Division I-AA, the Football Championship Subdivision is a subdivision of NCAA Division I comprised of members which meet specific membership requirements. For detailed requirements, consult the 2009-2010 NCAA Division I Manual (pp. 316-317).
- *National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)*: A voluntary, non-profit organization, consisting of approximately 1,200 members, through which colleges and universities in the United States govern their athletics programs. The NCAA is federated into three divisions (I, II, and III) and three subdivisions within Division I (Football Bowl Subdivision, formerly Division I-A; Football Championship Subdivision, formerly Division I-AA; and Division I Non-Football, formerly Division I-AAA).
- *NCAA Division I*: The highest level of intercollegiate athletics as categorized by the NCAA. In order to qualify for Division I classification, the athletic department must be in compliance with NCAA regulations and sponsor no less than 16 varsity sports. Additional requirements can be found on pages 308-317 in the 2009-2010 NCAA Division I Manual.
- *NCAA Division II*: Member institutions in Division II must meet minimal requirements, such as hosting at least four male varsity sports and four female varsity sports. Additional requirements can be found on the NCAA website (Division II Membership, 2010).

- *NCAA Division III*: Member institutions in Division III must meet minimal requirements, such as hosting at least five varsity sports. Additional requirements can be found on the NCAA website (Division III Membership, 2010).
- *National Letter of Intent (NLI)*: A document endorsed by the NCAA in which the recruit signs that binds him or her to attend a specific university (refer to Appendix B for a sample NLI).
- *Student-Athlete*: A student enrolled full-time at a college who is participating in intercollegiate athletics, either as a walk-on or scholarship player.

Operational Definitions

- *College-choice factor*: a characteristic that influences a prospective student-athlete when deciding which school to attend.
- *College-choice component*: a category empirically labeled and comprised of college-choice factors that share a common theme (refer to Appendix C for component categorizations).
- *Non-scholarship student-athlete*: A student-athlete who does not receive any athletically-related grant-in-aid.
- *Olympic Sport* (synonymous with “Non-Revenue Sport”): Any sport other than football and men’s basketball in intercollegiate athletics.
- *Ethnicity*: Self-identification data items in which participants in the study selected the ethnicity with which they most closely identify.
- *Revenue Sport*: Varsity football and varsity men’s basketball teams in intercollegiate athletics.

- *Walk-on student-athlete*: A student-athlete who competes for a team without having been recruited or offered an athletic scholarship. An individual may be recruited, but not offered an athletic grant-in-aid. In this case, the student-athlete could be referred to as a “recruited walk-on” or “preferred walk-on.”

Assumptions

- Subjects understood all questions being asked of them and answered objectively and honestly when completing the survey.
- All answers from student-athletes were anonymous and kept confidential.
- The completion of the survey and participation in the study was voluntary for all targeted subjects.
- The surveys completed and returned are a representative sample of the population.
- Each respondent was on the active roster for the 2010 training camp at the southeastern university at the time of the survey distribution.
- Testing procedures were followed such that a neutral environment was provided for subjects responding to the survey questions.
- Participation in the study had no bearing on participant’s position or playing time as a member of the football team.

Limitations

- Survey participants could only choose a single response on a Likert scale and did not have the option to respond on a continuum scale or in an open-ended format.
- Access to student-athletes was limited based on approval by athletic department personnel at the southeastern university.

- The sample for this study was narrowly focused to a single football team at an NCAA Division I FBS southeastern university. Thus, the results should not be broadly applied to other institutions (e.g., members of different NCAA conferences or NCAA Divisions).

Delimitations

- Only football players enrolled, offered an Athletic Scholarship Agreement during the college-selection process, and actively participating during the 2010 training camp (limited to a roster of 105 student-athletes) at an NCAA Division I FBS southeastern university were invited to participate in this study.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study are beneficial for multiple athletic department stakeholders, specifically including collegiate athletic administrators and NCAA football coaches, support staff, and student-athletes. It is important that collegiate athletic administrators are aware of student-athletes' college-choice factors so that administrators can better serve their student-athletes, athletic department, and institution. Moreover, it is vital that administrators and coaches have an understanding of choice factors so they can attract and retain personnel, including student-athletes and staff, who will enhance the brand of the program, athletic department, and academic institution. Likewise, it is crucial that prospective student-athletes are attentive to which college can best help them develop their academic, athletic, and personal lives. Therefore, in an effort to educate and empower collegiate administrators and coaches regarding techniques for identifying and developing an intentional brand as well as recruiting student-athletes that are a great fit for their respective institution, this study aimed to analyze the most influential college-choice factors that NCAA football players considered during the recruiting process.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Frameworks

The recruiting process involves a two-way exchange between coaches and prospective student-athletes. First, the coach targets prospective student-athletes he or she will recruit to join their program. Next, the coach will offer an athletic grant-in-aid to a few selective prospective student-athletes in hopes of getting them to enroll at their respective academic institution (refer to Appendix D for a sample offer letter). However, a coach's perspective offers only one side of the interaction because student-athletes must consider all of the direct and indirect college-choice factors that are associated with each of the institutions that extended an offer during the recruiting process. Ultimately, a prospective student-athlete accepts an offer and enrolls in an institution. Since this process involves dual perspectives from collegiate coaches and prospective student-athletes, it is important to identify a framework that allows both sides to prosper during the recruiting process. Therefore, three primary theoretical frameworks, brand identity, relationship marketing, and lifetime human capital, were utilized to guide the research.

Brand Identity and Relationship Marketing. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) defined brand image as the set of beliefs consumers hold about a particular object. Gladden, Milne, and Sutton (1998) and Aaker (1991) proceeded to explain that brand image is dependent upon perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty. Colleges and universities also represent unique, distinct brands in the educational marketplace. Lawlor

(1998) described the brand identity of a university as how the institution is perceived by alumni, prospective students, legislators, and the general public. As a result, it is important for coaches to be aware of their program's brand image since some of the consumers (i.e., recruits) will be selected to be an integral part of their program's future product.

A unique characteristic of college athletics is that the employee (e.g., collegiate athletic administrators, coaches, support staff) is also part of the brand and product. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) stated that "[employees] need to be recognized as a brand's 'ambassadors'...and can have a powerful impact on consumers' perceptions of both the brand and the organization" (p. 441). Similarly, the authors purported that employees are becoming central to the process of brand building and their behavior can either reinforce a brand's advertised values or, if inconsistent with these values, undermine the credibility of advertised messages (Harris & de Chernatony). Likewise, coaches and high-profile athletes attract significant media attention which could be argued as endorsing a team's brand (McCracken, 1989).

A multitude of studies suggest that prospective students choose an institution through a process similar to how they would shop for and purchase any other product (Johnson, Jubenville, & Goss, 2009). Therefore, when recruiting prospective student-athletes, it is important to realize that recruits are fans and consumers of college athletic teams before they are enrolled student-athletes at a particular university. In this educational marketplace, it is essential that sports programs value the concept of brand image as well as develop and embrace a marketing-oriented culture that caters to the wants and needs of the students that they are attempting to attract (Johnson et al., 2009; Lawlor, 1998). Furthermore, the concept of relationship marketing should be utilized to attract, maintain, and enhance relationships

with key constituents (Berry, 1983). As explained by Kotler (2004), the university that understands the “needs, perceptions, and behaviors of their [prospective students] will gain a competitive edge in student recruitment” (p. 4). Moreover, the concept of relationship marketing can also be extended beyond recruiting students to recruiting student-athletes.

When embarking on relationship marketing initiatives, it is extremely important that coaches understand the importance of attempting to attract student-athletes that help build the brand of the program, athletic department, and academic institution. As articulated by Johnson et al. (2009), coaches represent the goals of their institution and the student-athletes that coaches recruit should reflect those goals by excelling academically and contributing to the success of an athletic team.

In essence, if coaches are cognizant of the brand of their university and team, then they are afforded with the opportunity to recruit student-athletes via a relationship-oriented environment to continue to build the desired brand and add to the value of the sport program. For example, coaches can emphasize best fit when pitching a strategic combination of the academic, athletic, and/or personal attributes that are deemed as important extensions to the program, athletic department, and university brands. To be effective, collegiate administrators and coaches must be aware of the college-choice factors of student-athletes and build relationships with recruits in order to achieve a win-win-win scenario involving the university, coach, and student-athlete.

Lifetime Human Capital. Relationship marketing is most effective when coaches and administrators are able to identify the wants and needs of their student-athletes and add value to the student-athletes’ lives by meeting those expectations and desires. Consequently, the concepts of lifetime human capital can be used to help explain prospective student-

athletes' preferences (i.e., college-choice factors) when choosing a university. Authors Dumond, Lynch, and Platania (2008) explained the theoretical frameworks involving lifetime human capital by commenting that,

When recruits select a college, they do so to maximize their expected discounted lifetime utility with respect to that choice. [It is assumed] that recruits evaluate the discounted accrued benefits of attending each school against the discounted accrued costs (p. 71).

To that end, a student-athlete compares the benefits with the costs of attending a particular university. Then, the student-athlete selects the institution with the greatest net benefits according to his or her preferences. Furthermore, the researchers articulated that,

The benefits of attending college are assumed to be an improvement in human capital that would increase the productivity [or marketability] of the recruit in the labor market. This improvement in human capital may differ from one school to another, and [it is assumed] that any such differences are related to the academic reputation of the university (p. 71).

To continue to expand upon this theoretical framework and apply it to the current research, an NCAA Division I football player may have chosen a particular school to improve his human capital for the professional football labor market (e.g., National Football League, Canadian Football League, Arena Football League). If improving one's stock for the professional ranks is the primary intent when choosing a college or university, it is assumed that the student-athlete will respond that athletically-related college-choice factors were more influential in the college-selection process than the academically-related college-choice factors. On the contrary, if an NCAA Division I football player's primary motivation for

choosing a school was to improve his human capital in the broader labor market excluding professional sports, it is assumed that the student-athlete will respond that academically-related college-choice factors were more influential in the college-selection process (Dumond et al., 2008).

The university personnel (e.g., collegiate administrators, coaches, support staff) who add the most perceived value to prospective student-athletes' lifetime human capital are most likely to attract and enroll the recruit. Furthermore, prospective student-athletes who consciously evaluate their own lifetime human capital desires are more apt to enroll in a university that is a great fit for himself or herself. To facilitate attracting and enrolling prospective students who are a great fit for an institution, researchers across multiple disciplines have investigated the college-choice factors and decision-making processes of prospective students; thus, the college-choice factor literature will be examined before discussing the methodology used in the research.

Introduction to College-Choice Factors

Before students decide on which college to attend, they must first decide that they want to go to college. Pope and Fermin (2003) conducted a study to assess high school students' decisions regarding whether or not to attend college. The researchers determined that personal and career goals, as well as socioeconomic mobility, were significant factors influencing students' decision about whether or not to attend college.

Furthermore, Hossler and Gallagher (1987) proposed a model that identified three distinct phases of the process in which a student chooses a college: predisposition, search, and choice. In the predisposition phase, the student consults an initial round of resources, such as parents, guidance counselors, and friends, in order to decide whether or not he or she

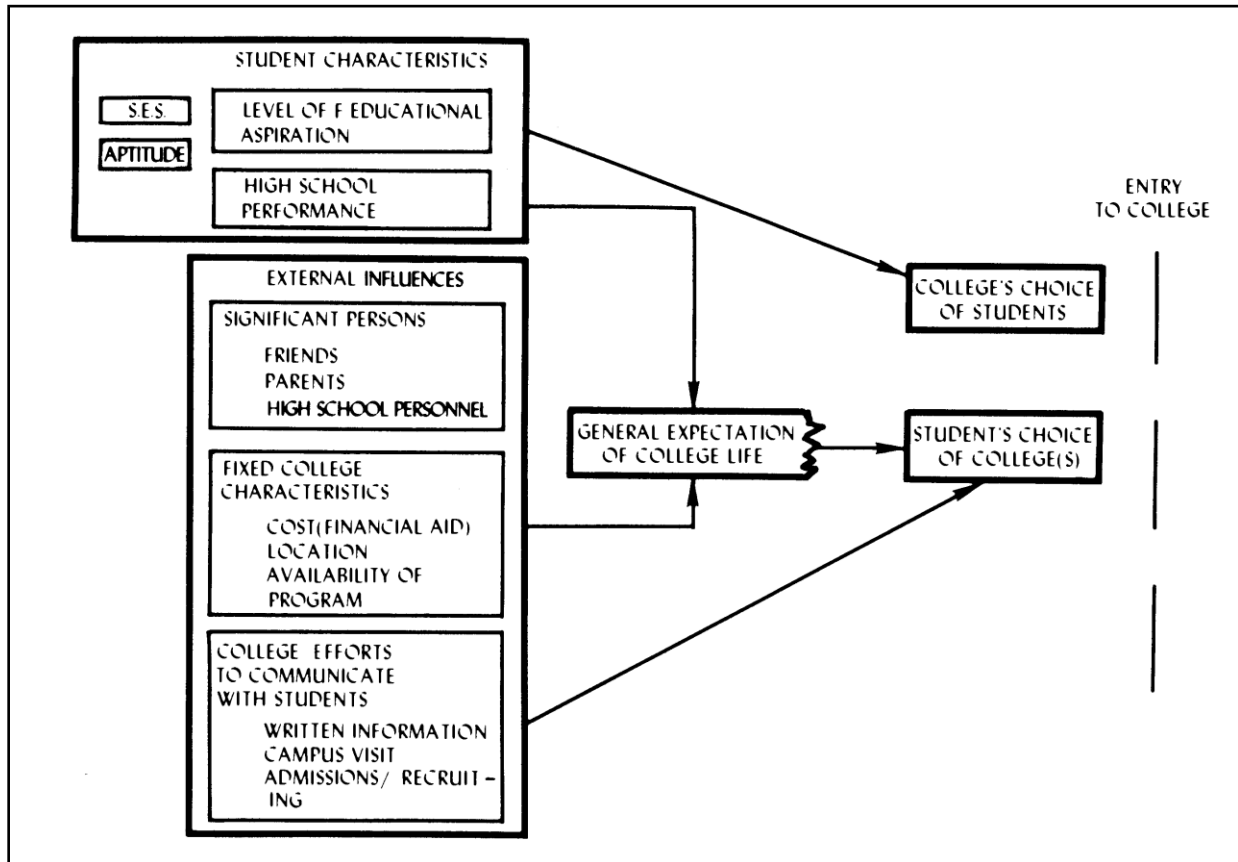
will pursue a postsecondary education. If the prospective student decides that he wants to pursue college, he enters the search phase. During the search phase, the student reflects on the important criteria and characteristics desired in a college. At the end of the search phase, the student must evaluate all of his research and valued criteria to ultimately make a decision about which college to attend (Hossler & Gallagher).

Researchers Christiansen et al. (2003) extended Hossler's and Gallagher's (1987) three-phase model to analyze the use of the Internet, or lack thereof, during the search and choice phases. In their study, high school students were surveyed and results detailed that students were found to frequently utilize communication options to search to find answers regarding admissions requirements, areas of study, and virtual tours. Similarly, high school students utilized institutions' websites most frequently to research housing and financial aid information.

Models of Student College Choice

As the college admission process has become more competitive, universities have studied more conventional marketing and recruitment literature. Among this research includes Chapman (1981), who presented a model, as depicted in Figure 2.1, which illustrates how student characteristics and external influences affect prospective students' choices regarding college selection. Among the student characteristics were socioeconomic status, aptitude, level of educational aspiration, and high school performance; the external influences include significant personal influences, fixed college characteristics, and college's efforts to communicate with students.

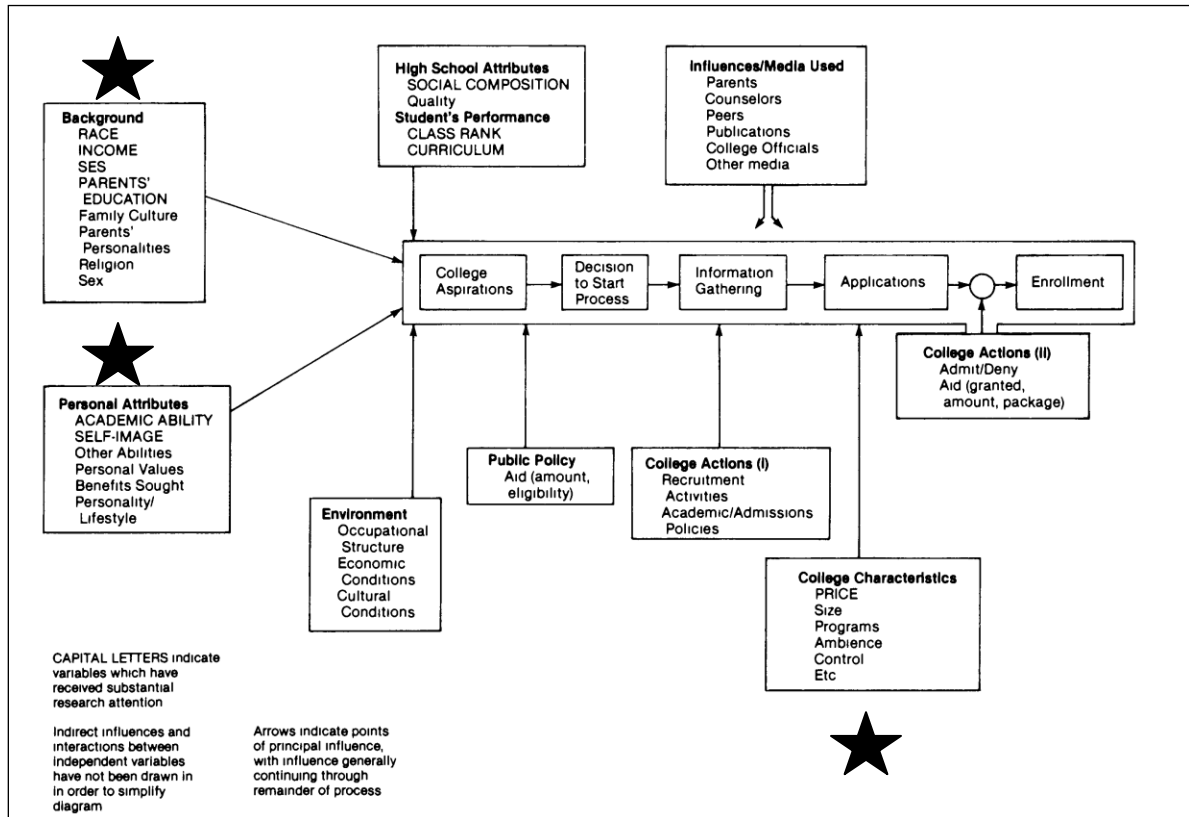
Figure 2.1. Influences on Student College Choice



Note. Adapted from "A Model of Student College Choice," by D. W. Chapman, 1981, *Journal of Higher Education*, 52(5), p. 492.

Research by Litten (1982) expanded upon the Chapman (1981) model, as displayed in Figure 2.2, which illustrates additional student choice decision-making factors. The most relevant sub-categories as they applied to this research were ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex/gender, aptitude, level of educational aspiration, significant persons, cost, and degree programs offered.

Figure 2.2. An Expanded Model of the College Selection Process



Note. Adapted from “Different Strokes in the Applicant Pool: Some Refinement in a Model of Student College Choice,” by L. H. Litten, 1982, *Journal of Higher Education*, 53(4), p. 388.

Ethnicity. According to Litten (1982), students of different ethnicities reported statistically significant differences regarding factors that influenced their college choice. For instance, Litten’s study suggested that Black students were interested in more schools than White students, and that Black students began the college-selection process earlier and decided later than their White counterparts. Black students also consulted more sources of information before making their final decision about where to attend college. Lastly, Black

students were more likely to rate financial aid considerations as “very important” more frequently than their White and Asian counterparts (Litten).

Socioeconomic status. Tillery (1973) presented evidence that suggested students whose households were characterized as average or below average socioeconomic status were less likely to attend four-year institutions than students from households with higher socioeconomic status. Similarly, family income was a demographic factor that produced correlations with student choice of college. According to Davis and Van Dusen (1975), students from lower income households were likely to attend community and state colleges, students from middle income households preferred four-year state universities, and students from upper income households had a tendency to choose private colleges and universities.

A study by Hearn (1984) concluded that “in the high school to college transition, the academically and socioeconomically ‘rich’ become richer (i.e., attend schools having superior intellectual and material resources) while the academically and socioeconomically ‘poor’ become poorer” (p. 28). Although these results offered predispositions for typical students, the same data may not be applicable for student-athletes. Since the majority of NCAA Division I FBS football players are Black and historically come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, their presence in predominantly White institutions means the opportunity for socioeconomic incline.

Sex / Gender. A report produced by Hanson and Litten (1982) concluded that students were more likely to consult their parent of the same sex rather than the parent of the opposite sex. Also, women were reported to more frequently take the advice of peers, friends, and significant others when making their collection selection choice. As a result, coaches should make a conscious effort to not only sell their sport and university to the prospective

student-athlete, but to the parents of the recruit as well. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Doyle and Gaeth (1990), investigators determined that women placed more value on academic factors than their male counterparts when choosing which school to attend. The researchers' rationale for this occurrence was attributed to the fact that males generally have more opportunities to play professionally than females, thus placing less emphasis on academic factors.

Aptitude. Students in middle and high school are often recommended to take scholastic aptitude tests to measure their aptitude for achievement of college courses. As a result, Nolfi (1975) suggested that students self-select their institution based on aptitude measures. For example, it is common for universities to post admission criteria and aptitude measures of current students. Nolfi highlighted that prospective students were cognizant of this information because they were inclined to enroll in schools with other students with similar aptitude scores as themselves.

In a survey study, Litten (1982) addressed the occurrence that students who scored higher on aptitude tests were more likely to be influenced by the academic programs of a particular university. Consequently, this valuable piece of information can be utilized by coaches and administrators involved with recruiting prospective student-athletes. Depending on the aptitude score of an individual, recruiters can customize their "sales pitch" accordingly.

Level of educational aspiration. Brookover, Erickson, and Joiner (1967) defined aspirations as an individual's hope and desire about the future. As a result, students who were confident about which paths they wanted to pursue were more likely to choose schools that would help them achieve their educational goals. Aspirations relate to researching student-

athlete college-choice factors because it is a general perception of the public that student-athletes' choose their school based solely on athletic aspirations rather than educational aspirations. Therefore, researching the college-choice factors of student-athletes helped to address the validity of this perception, particularly as it relates to NCAA Division I FBS football players.

High school performance. Similar to aptitude measures, students may limit their admission applications to schools based on their cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) and rank in class, especially when comparing themselves to current university students (Chapman, 1981). Although this model makes sense for non student-athletes, student-athletes are not necessarily held to the same academic standards throughout the admissions process. However, this same model can be applied by substituting athletic performance rather than academic performance. If this logic is utilized, student-athletes may be more apt to choose schools with student-athletes of comparable skills sets as their own.

Significant persons. Chapman's (1981) model presented information that suggested that non student-athletes cherished the advice of family and friends when choosing which college to attend. Evidence presented by Tillery (1973) and Tillery and Kildegaard (1973) confirmed that parents were the most persuasive persons in students' college-selection decision. Their research suggested that since cost and affordability affected parents' college preference, cost and affordability indirectly effects students' choice as well.

Research by Paulsen (1990) corroborated that parents were indeed the most influential factor in college-bound students' decision-making process. Paulsen briefly alluded to utilizing a social psychological context to explain parental encouragement and its effect on parents counseling their children.

Cost and Financial Aid. Tillery and Kildegaard (1973) found that the cost of attending a post-secondary educational institution had a greater influence on the student's initial decision of whether or not to pursue college, but cost did not factor into which institution to choose. On a related note, Ihlanfeldt (1980) suggested that without financial aid, it is likely that a large number of students would be limited to which colleges they would be able to afford. In relation to intercollegiate athletics, the amount of athletic grant-in-aid offered by individual institutions could influence which college a prospective student-athlete chooses. Specifically as it relates to this study, the cost of attending college for a football recruit who is offered a full scholarship could virtually be no factor when selecting a college. Although the cost of attending school may not be a factor for individuals receiving a full athletic scholarship, the perceived value of the obtaining a degree from a particular institution is certainly a factor that could influence college selection.

Other studies that confirmed the influence of financial aid include Baksh and Hoyt (2002) and Doyle and Gaeth (1990). Evidence presented by Baksh and Hoyt (2001) suggested that receiving a scholarship meant the student was more than twice as likely to attend the university extending the scholarship. Likewise, the research of Doyle & Gaeth (1990) concluded that the amount of scholarship money offered was the most influential factor for student-athletes when selecting which institution to attend.

Perna and Titus (2004) presented an economic model to explain how cost and financial aid factored into students' decision to attend or not attend certain universities. Perna states, "An individual makes a decision about attending college by comparing the benefits with the costs for all possible alternatives and then selecting the alternative with the greatest net benefit, given the individual's personal tastes and preferences" (p. 505).

This basic logic suggests that an economic theoretical framework could be used as an alternative framework to evaluate student decision-making.

Location. Using demographic information of enrolled students, Ihlanfeldt (1980) reported that 92% of students attended a college within 400 miles from their hometown. Although students may not attribute proximity of college as an influential factor in their decision-making process, the mere facts of the data prove that proximity to students' hometown is a factor that cannot be ignored. Additionally, this statistical data suggests that there may be value for coaches to focus their recruiting efforts in their institution's state and regional geographic areas.

Academic programs offered. Studies have affirmed that students selected schools in which they felt best prepared them to enter graduate school or get jobs (Chapman, 1979; Davis & Van Dusen, 1975). Although these authors focused on the courses offered and specialized content areas, their conclusions can be extended to certain student-athletes. For example, many revenue sport athletes, notably men's basketball and football players at NCAA Division I institutions, voiced that their plan for post-graduation was to play professionally (e.g., National Basketball Association or National Football League, respectively) (Zimbalist, 1999). Consequently, the conclusions offered by Chapman (1979) and Davis and Van Dusen (1975) would suggest that revenue student-athletes' chose schools that best prepared them to get jobs in the professional sports league.

College efforts to communicate with students. As the competition to enroll qualified prospective students increases, institutions are required to match the marketing techniques employed by their competitors in order to attract these students (Chapman, 1981). According to Dominick et al. (1980) the most effective strategies for marketing to

prospective students involved visits from college representatives to high schools and bringing high school students on campus visits. The results from Dominick et al. are readily applicable to the recruiting culture of college athletics. It is common for coaches to make visits to watch high school games and speak individually with recruits, and it is ordinary for recruits to be invited to campus on unofficial and official visits by schools interested in offering prospective student-athletes an athletic grant-in-aid. Undoubtedly, the experiences from an official visit to campus have an influence on which institution the recruit selects.

College-Choice Factors of Non Student-Athletes

Previous researchers have focused considerably on the college-choice factors of non student-athletes. For instance, an early analysis from Spies (1978) suggested that students with above-average academic credentials were more motivated to choose a university based on their perceptions of the institution's academic reputation rather than the cost of attending the college or university. Similar research by Sevier (1993) surveyed high school juniors but presented different conclusions. Sevier's results revealed that cost and availability of college program of study were the most important factors when considering which college to attend. However, a study conducted by Galotti and Mark (1994) offered different results regarding college choice factors of non student-athletes. The researchers determined that the most important factors in the college search process were parents/guardians, friends, and guidance counselor materials.

A study performed by Hu and Hossler (2000) involved similar factors but concluded different results. Findings from Hu and Hossler suggested that the cost of the institution and family influences were students' most significant factors when choosing a college. In a study conducted by Canale, Dunlap, Britt, and Donahue (1996), high school students most

frequently responded that the quality of teachers and availability of majors were their top considerations in the college-selection process. Once again, the cost of attendance was also a significant factor when determining which college to choose.

Research conducted by Hoyt and Brown (2003) presented a list of college-choice factors rated from very important to not important by students attending four-year institutions. Results from their study indicated that the “availability of major/program of study” was rated most frequently as very important and “parents attended school there” and “availability of sororities/fraternities or other clubs and organizations” were the two factors that were most frequently labeled as not important.

College-Choice Factors of Student-Athletes

Although the theoretical frameworks for the decision-making process for non student-athletes can be applied to student-athletes, it is essential to recognize that student-athletes are recruited differently than non student-athletes. As a result, student-athletes are likely to cite different factors that influence their college-choice preferences.

Mathes and Gurney (1985) found that student-athletes rated the academic environment and college coach as more important factors than the athletic environment in their college-selection process. Six years later, Adler and Adler (1991) continued to find that the most frequent reason that student-athletes chose their institution depended on the reputation of the college coach. Conversely, researchers Konnert and Giese (1987) concluded that student-athletes valued the perception of playing early in their careers. Additionally, a study by Reynaud (1998) identified a separate factor as the greatest consideration when student-athletes selected a school, which was the offering and acceptance of an athletic scholarship. Moreover, a study conducted by Hodges and Barbuto (2002) confirmed that

facilities and campus visits were critical factors of high school students when selecting which college to attend. As a result, over the past twenty years, multiple studies have drawn different conclusions about the most important factors that student-athletes considered when selecting a university to attend.

Furthermore, there are additional factors specific to NCAA Division I prospects' unique situations that affect their college-choice decision. For example, Letawsky (2003) highlighted that television exposure, the opportunity to play earlier, facilitated route to the professional ranks, and/or playing in front of large crowds, or lack thereof, were notable motivating factors that student-athletes considered when selecting which college to attend.

Letawsky (2003) proceeded to categorize college-choice factors of student-athletes as related to the academic environment and the athletic environment. Letawsky's study concluded that "the most important factor for student-athletes was the degree program options offered by the university" (p. 608). Moreover, Letawsky's results illustrated that other factors of the college-selection process for student-athletes were the head coach, academic support services, location and community of campus, sports traditions, athletic facilities, and the official on-campus visit. To apply the results from Letawsky's study, since student-athletes cited academically motivated factors as two of their top three college-choice factors, coaches and administrators should be aware that the academic assets of a university are just as important to prospective student-athletes as athletic factors.

In summary, the most influential factors affecting where a student-athlete chose to enroll were inconsistent. Depending on a particular study, the most influential factors could include a scholarship, characteristics of the head coach, areas of study, quality of facilities, academic support services, or a winning program (Pauline, 2004). Consequently, it is crucial

to perform timely research to ensure that results are relevant and applicable to the current generation of prospective student-athletes.

Literature Review Discussion

All of the aforementioned studies, results, and conclusions provide valuable insights for evaluating factors that influence student-athletes' college-selection process. Past research has investigated various decision-making models and addressed the academic, athletic, personal, financial, and external factors that influenced institutional choice. Although it is valuable to recognize previous studies which have analyzed the college-choice factors of student-athletes and non student-athletes, a large portion of these studies focused on the selection process. However, this study focuses on analyzing the specific college-choice factors that lead to a decision rather than focusing on the decision-making process itself.

Ultimately, all personnel of a university (i.e., faculty, staff, and students) contribute to the brand identity of the university, and understanding the preferences of the students, particularly student-athletes, will help attract and retain personnel that are a great fit for the institution. Therefore, this research surveyed NCAA Division I FBS football players to examine how student-athletes' college-choice factors impact the brand of a sport program, athletic department, and university.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the college-choice factors of current NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) football players who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement at a southeastern university to determine strategies to encourage brand identity and best fit principles in the recruiting process.

Instrumentation

The data for this study was collected through survey instrumentation, which was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). A modified version of the Student-Athlete College-Choice Profile (SACCP), originally developed by Gabert, Hale, and Montalvo (1999), was used to collect data for this study (refer to Appendix E to view the survey instrument). The demographic background information was utilized to examine the influence of the college-choice factors based on segmentation by the following independent samples: ethnicity, residency status, and football position. Following the requests for demographic and personal information, there was a list of 63 college-choice factors included on the instrument, such as relationship with the college head football coach, influence from parents/guardians, quality of football facilities at the college, overall campus atmosphere and environment, and academic value of the college's degree.

Student-athletes completing the survey were asked to recall the recruiting process and retroactively rate how influential the list of 63 college-choice factors were during their

collection-selection process (before the results were analyzed, the researcher removed responses from two of the factors due to frequent misinterpretation of the question; therefore, only 61 college-choice factors were analyzed). Data collected by the instrument was intended to measure the degree of influence that each of the college-choice factors exerted on their decision of which college to attend. Subjects were asked to rate each of these individual college-choice factors using a four-point semantic differential Likert scale, which included 0 (Not Influential/NONE), 1 (Slightly Influential/LOW), 2 (Moderately Influential/MEDIUM), and 3 (Extremely Influential/HIGH), to describe the extent to which each factor had influenced their selection of which institution to attend. Respondents also had the option to respond “Not Applicable” and/or skip any question(s). A semantic differential Likert scale was chosen because it represented an ordinal scale, at minimum, and an approximate interval scale.

Credibility, validity, and reliability. This study utilized an instrument that previously addressed reliability considerations. Specifically, the same core variables of the instrument used in this study were subjected to a Cronbach alpha test in Gabert’s (1999) study, which produced an overall internal consistency reliability score of 0.84. To address additional credibility, validity, and reliability concerns based on modifying the aforementioned instrument, the researcher assembled a panel of experts to identify problem areas and provide feedback for each draft of the proposed modified instrument. The panel included professors well-versed in survey development and distribution, a practicing collegiate athletic administrator, and a research statistician. After a final rough draft was developed, the researcher performed a convenience pilot test involving several current and former student-athletes across multiple sports from a variety of NCAA member institutions.

Feedback was gathered from the pilot test participants and discussed with the panel of experts. Appropriate revisions were made according to the recommendations from the panel and a final draft of the survey instrument was rendered to the IRB for approval.

Sample

The population for this study included NCAA Division I FBS football players at a southeastern university who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement during the college-selection process ($N = 77$). A total of 84 football student-athletes were eligible to participate in the study, but only 77 players voluntarily responded, which yielded an overall return rate of 91.7%. Based on the relatively high response rate, it is assumed that the responses are a representative sample of all NCAA Division I FBS football players who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement at the southeastern university. More specifically, the responses demonstrated the following demographic breakdown of the participants:

- Ethnicity – Black (71%), White (29%)
 - Black – 52 responded out of 58 who were eligible (89.7%)
 - White – 21 responded out of 22 who were eligible (95.5%)
- Residency Status – In-state (43%), Out-of-state (57%)
 - In-state – 33 responded out of 37 who were eligible (89.2%)
 - Out-of-state – 44 responded out of 47 who were eligible (93.6%)
- Football Position – Offense (50%), Defense (50%)
 - Offense – 37 responded out of 39 who were eligible (94.9%)
 - Defense – 37 responded out of 42 who were eligible (88.1%)

Procedures and Data Collection

The data collection period began on the first day of practice for the 2010 football season and concluded after the last regular-season football game of the 2010 season. Attempts were made to survey the target population by approaching and inviting potential subjects when multiple members of the team were gathered (e.g., position meetings, meals, athletic training treatment sessions). Surveys were administered in-person to all subjects who voluntarily participated in the research. In-person data collection was chosen to ensure that the survey was administered by the same researcher in a consistent fashion and that participants did not feel coerced to participate in the study. When administering the survey, the researcher explained the purpose and significance of the study, outlined the survey's questions, emphasized the confidentiality and anonymity procedures guaranteed to each participant, and thanked the respondent for his participation in the study. Furthermore, the researcher was available to answer participants' questions regarding the overall study as well as individual survey questions. Subjects were incentivized to participate in the study by having the option to receive a summary of the results upon completion of the study. Permission to survey members of the football team at the southeastern university was granted by the Associate Athletic Director for Football Administration.

Statistical Analytical Methodology

Responses gathered from NCAA Division I FBS football players who participated in the study were first compiled in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Once all of the data collection procedures were completed, the researcher transferred the data into a prearranged dataset using the statistical analysis software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. The columns were labeled the following: subject, football position,

residency status, ethnicity, scholarship status, and one column for each of the 61 college-choice factors. Furthermore, each of the independent categorical variables and college-choice factors were coded according to the following diagram in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1
SPSS Coding of Research Variables

		SPSS CODES			
		0	1	2	3
COLUMNS					
	Ethnicity	Other	Black	White	-
	Residency Status	Out-of-state	In-state	-	-
	Scholarship Status	Did not sign an Athletic Scholarship Agreement	Signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement	-	-
	Football Position	Offense	Defense	Special Teams	-
	College-Choice Factors	Not Influential (None)	Slightly Influential (Low)	Moderately Influential (Medium)	Extremely Influential (High)

Once of all the raw data was entered into SPSS, a series of eight variables were computed to assist the researcher with examining and analyzing the results of the responses. Essentially, each of the 61 college-choice factors were grouped into one of eight components, which were empirically labeled as Relationships with College Football/Athletic Department Personnel, Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Individuals, Football Characteristics at the College, Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College,

Demographic Characteristics of the College, Miscellaneous Personal Preferences, Football Athletic Success, and Recruiting Experience. A mean was calculated for each component by summing the responses of the individual factors and then dividing by the number of factors in the component. Therefore, each subject had one mean for each of the eight components.

To answer research questions 1, 2, and 4, descriptive statistics were employed to compute means for the college-choice components as well as the individual college-choice factors. After the means were calculated and grouped according to the particular research question, the components/factors were sorted in descending order to reveal the most influential college-choice components/factors relative to each other. Moreover, a series of one-way repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were employed to examine if a significant difference existed between at least one pair of component means within each segmented sample (i.e., Black, White, in-state, out-of-state, offense, and defense). If a significant difference was discovered, a post hoc test(s) was performed to analyze differences between selected means. Particularly, a post hoc was employed where a natural break(s) occurred (as empirically observed by the researcher).

To address research question 3, a series of two by eight mixed-model ANOVA tests were performed to test differences between means. Specifically, the mixed-model ANOVA examined if there was a significant interaction effect between each of the independent samples (i.e., Black vs. White; In-state vs. Out-of-state; Offense vs. Defense) and each of the eight college-choice components. If the mixed-model ANOVA produced a significant interaction effect, a Tukey post hoc was calculated to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the means of the independent samples within each of the college-choice components. The findings are presented in the following “Results” chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

RQ 1: Most Influential College-Choice Components – All Respondents

Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the most influential college-choice components during the college-selection process of NCAA Division I FBS football players at a southeastern university who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement. A mean was calculated for each of the college-choice components based on the responses of the entire sample. The means were then sorted in descending order, as depicted in Table 4.1, to reveal the most influential college-choice components, relative to each other, of the target population.

Table 4.1

Most Influential College-Choice Components – All Respondents (N = 77)

College-Choice Component	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Football Athletic Success	2.20	0.643
Football Characteristics at the College	2.07	0.587
Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel	2.01	0.533
Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College	1.98	0.534
Demographic Characteristics of the College	1.84	0.596
Miscellaneous Personal Preferences	1.84	0.569
Recruiting Experience	1.82	0.657
Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals	1.41	0.695

Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)

$F = 28.91, p < 0.001$; Tukey post hoc critical value = 0.223

“Football Athletic Success” reported the largest mean ($M = 2.20$; $SD = 0.643$), indicating that overall a higher degree of influence was selected for that component. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA produced a p value < 0.001 , meaning there was a statistically significant difference between at least one pair of means. The Tukey post hoc revealed a critical value of 0.223, indicating a difference between any two means must exceed 0.223 for the difference to be statistically significant. Although a natural break occurred between the most influential college-choice component and the second most influential college-choice component, the difference between the means, 0.13, was not large enough to indicate significance. Furthermore, another natural break occurred between the fourth and fifth most influential college-choice components. As a result, “Football Athletic Success” and “Football Characteristics at the College” were significantly more influential than the lowest four college-choice components. “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Personnel” had the lowest mean and the Tukey post hoc revealed that it was significantly lower than all of the other components since the difference between its mean and the second lowest mean was 0.41, which exceeded the required critical value of 0.22.

RQ 2A: Most Influential College-Choice Components – Ethnicity Considerations

Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the most influential college-choice components during the college-selection process when focusing on the ethnicity of student-athletes participating in the study. Two independent samples were analyzed, which included Black and White. A third category, “mixed ethnicity/other,” was not included in the statistical analysis because the sample size was not comparable to the Black and White samples. A mean was calculated for each of the college-choice components based on the

responses of each of the independent ethnic samples. The means were then sorted in descending order, as depicted in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, to reveal the most influential college-choice components of Black and White samples, respectively.

Table 4.2
Most Influential College-Choice Components – Black Respondents
($N = 52$)

College-Choice Component	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Football Athletic Success	2.29	0.602
Football Characteristics at the College	2.10	0.596
Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel	2.02	0.531
Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College	1.97	0.536
Miscellaneous Personal Preferences	1.95	0.521
Demographic Characteristics of the College	1.94	0.528
Recruiting Experience	1.88	0.609
Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals	1.48	0.688

Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)
 $F = 20.47$, $p < 0.001$; Tukey post hoc critical value = 0.265

As illustrated in Table 4.2, the college-choice component that reported the largest mean value for Black respondents, and deemed most influential, was “Football Athletic Success” ($M = 2.29$; $SD = 0.602$). A one-way repeated measures ANOVA produced a p value < 0.001 , indicating there was a statistically significant difference between at least one pair of means. The Tukey post hoc revealed a critical value of 0.265, indicating a difference between any two means must exceed 0.265 for the difference to be statistically significant. A natural break occurred between the first and second most influential college-choice components so a Tukey post hoc was calculated and revealed that the mean difference did not exceed the critical value of 0.265, so the difference was not significant. However, “Football Athletic

Success” proved to be significantly more influential than all other college-choice components other than “Football Characteristics at the College” ($M = 2.10$; $SD = 0.596$). An additional natural break occurred between the least influential college-choice component and the all other components. Consequently, “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Individuals” ($N = 1.48$; $SD = 0.688$) exerted a significantly lower degree of influence on the Black sample.

Table 4.3

Most Influential College-Choice Components – White Respondents (N = 21)

College-Choice Component	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel	2.02	0.542
Football Characteristics at the College	2.01	0.591
Football Athletic Success	2.00	0.667
Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College	1.96	0.549
Demographic Characteristics of the College	1.68	0.689
Recruiting Experience	1.62	0.778
Miscellaneous Personal Preferences	1.60	0.583
Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals	1.23	0.664

Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)

$F = 11.07$, $p < 0.001$; Tukey post hoc critical value = 0.366

When focusing on the White respondents, as depicted in Table 4.3, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA produced a p value < 0.001 , indicating there was a statistically significant difference between at least one pair of means. The Tukey post hoc revealed a critical value of 0.366, indicating a difference between any two means must exceed 0.366 for the difference to be statistically significant. White subjects’ responses revealed two natural breaks between the means of the eight college-choice components. The top four college-

choice components only had a difference in means ranging from 1.96 to 2.02. Although the top four college-choice components were not significantly more influential than the lower four college-choice components, the relatively small range of values among the top four components implied that they were of similar influence to White respondents. Additionally, the least influential college-choice component, “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Individuals” ($M = 1.23$; $SD = 0.664$) was significantly lower than all other college-choice components.

RQ 2B: Most Influential College-Choice Components – Residency Status

Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the most influential college-choice components during the college-selection process when focusing on the residency status of respondents. A mean was calculated for each of the college-choice components based on the responses of each of the independent samples (i.e., in-state and out-of-state). The means were then sorted in descending order, as depicted in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, to reveal the most influential college-choice components of in-state and out-of-state student-athletes, respectively.

Table 4.4

Most Influential College-Choice Components – In-state Respondents (N = 33)

College-Choice Component	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Football Athletic Success	2.23	0.587
Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College	2.08	0.527
Football Characteristics at the College	2.08	0.561
Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel	2.07	0.576
Demographic Characteristics of the College	1.96	0.576
Miscellaneous Personal Preferences	1.93	0.473
Recruiting Experience	1.91	0.640
Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals	1.45	0.664

Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)

$F = 15.59$, $p < 0.001$; Tukey post hoc critical value = 0.252

When focusing on the responses from in-state participants (as produced in Table 4.4), a one-way repeated measures ANOVA was employed to test if there were significant differences between the means of their college-choice components. An F value of 15.59 produced a p value < 0.001 indicating that a statistically significant difference existed in at least one pair of means. “Football Athletic Success” ($M = 2.23$; $SD = 0.587$) was the most influential college-choice component for the in-state sample and a natural break occurred between its mean and the second most influential college-choice component, “Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics at the College” ($M = 2.08$; $SD = 0.527$). A Tukey post hoc critical value revealed that differences in means had to exceed 0.252 in order for a significant difference to occur. Although the most influential college-choice component was not significantly more influential than the second most influential component, “Football Athletic Success” was significantly more influential than the lowest four college-choice components. Furthermore, the mean for the least influential component, “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Individuals” ($M = 1.45$; $SD = 0.664$), was significantly lower

than all other components due to the fact that the difference between its mean and the mean of “Recruiting Experience” ($M = 1.91$; $SD = 0.640$) exceeded the Tukey post hoc critical value of 0.252.

Table 4.5

Most Influential College-Choice Components – Out-of-state Respondents (N = 44)

College-Choice Component	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Football Athletic Success	2.18	0.688
Football Characteristics at the College	2.07	0.612
Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel	1.97	0.501
Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College	1.90	0.533
Miscellaneous Personal Preferences	1.77	0.628
Demographic Characteristics of the College	1.76	0.603
Recruiting Experience	1.75	0.669
Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals	1.37	0.723

Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)

$F = 14.83$, $p < 0.001$; Tukey post hoc critical value = 0.274

Table 4.5 illustrates the most influential college-choice components of the out-of-state respondents. The researcher utilized a one-way repeated measures ANOVA to analyze if there were significant statistical differences between any pair of college-choice component means when focusing on the out-of-state responses. The repeated measures ANOVA produced an F value of 14.83 which resulted in a p value < 0.001 , indicating there was a statistically significant difference between at least one pair of means. The Tukey post hoc revealed a critical value of 0.274, indicating a difference between any two means must exceed 0.274 for the difference to be statistically significant. Empirical observations of the results of the out-of-state sample exposed a natural break occurring between the college-

choice components ranked fourth and fifth most influential. The difference between the fifth most influential component and the second most influential component produced a difference in means of 0.30, which surpassed the critical value of 0.274. Consequently, “Football Athletic Success” ($M = 2.18$; $SD = 0.688$) and “Football Characteristics at the College” ($M = 2.07$; $SD = 0.612$) were significantly more influential to out-of-state respondents than the lowest four college-choice components. Additionally, “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Individuals” ($M = 1.37$; $SD = 0.723$) was significantly less influential than all other college-choice components.

RQ 2C: Most Influential College-Choice Components – Football Position

In addition to the investigation of responses based on the previous background information, analyses were also employed to examine the most influential college-choice components of participants when focusing on the football position of the respondents. Independent samples were categorized by offense and defense; a third category, special teams,” was not included in the statistical analysis because the sample size was not comparable to the offense and defense samples. A mean was calculated for each of the college-choice components based on the responses of each of the independent football position samples. The means were then sorted in descending order, as depicted in Tables 4.6 and 4.7, to reveal the most influential college-choice components of players who primarily play offense and defense, respectively.

Table 4.6

Most Influential College-Choice Components – Offensive Position Respondents (N = 37)

College-Choice Component	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Football Athletic Success	2.13	0.668
Football Characteristics at the College	2.01	0.582
Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College	2.01	0.587
Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel	1.99	0.509
Recruiting Experience	1.82	0.700
Demographic Characteristics of the College	1.76	0.655
Miscellaneous Personal Preferences	1.73	0.657
Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals	1.39	0.727

Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)

$F = 12.61$, $p < 0.001$; Tukey post hoc critical value = 0.327

Table 4.6 describes the results of the responses from participants who identified themselves as offensive football players. The researcher utilized a one-way repeated measures ANOVA to analyze if there was a significant statistical difference between any pair of college-choice component means. The repeated measures ANOVA produced an F value of 12.61 which resulted in a p value < 0.001 , indicating there was a statistically significant difference between at least one pair of means. The Tukey post hoc revealed a critical value of 0.327, indicating a difference between any two means must exceed 0.327 for the difference to be statistically significant. Empirical observations of the results of the offensive sample revealed a natural break which occurred between the means of the fourth and fifth most influential college-choice components. The difference between these two aforementioned means was 0.17, which did not exceed the required critical value of 0.33 produced by the Tukey post hoc calculation. However, using the natural break as a starting bench mark, “Football Athletic Success” ($M = 2.13$; $SD = 0.668$) proved to be significantly more influential than the lowest three college-choice components. Similar to previous independent

samples, “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Individuals” ($M = 1.39$; $SD = 0.727$) was significantly less influential than all other college-choice components as signified by a difference in means of at least 0.34.

Table 4.7

Most Influential College-Choice Components – Defensive Position Respondents ($N = 37$)

College-Choice Component	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Football Athletic Success	2.29	0.617
Football Characteristics at the College	2.12	0.609
Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel	2.01	0.560
Miscellaneous Personal Preferences	1.96	0.469
Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College	1.92	0.496
Demographic Characteristics of the College	1.92	0.547
Recruiting Experiences	1.82	0.648
Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals	1.43	0.689

Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)

$F = 16.30$, $p < 0.001$; Tukey post hoc critical value = 0.263

Table 4.7 illustrates results from the responses of participants who identified themselves as defensive football players. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was employed to test if there was a significant statistical difference between any pair of college-choice component means. The repeated measures ANOVA produced an F value of 16.30 which resulted in a p value < 0.001 , indicating there was a statistically significant difference between at least one pair of component means. The Tukey post hoc revealed a critical value of 0.263, indicating a difference between any two means must exceed 0.263 for the difference to be statistically significant. After calculating the means and sorting them in descending order, “Football Athletic Success” ($M = 2.29$; $SD = 0.617$) proved to be the most

influential college-choice component for participants who identified their position as defensive. A natural break occurred between the most influential college-choice component and the second most influential component, but the difference between the means did not overcome the required critical value of 0.26. However, “Football Athletic Success” did overcome the required difference in means when compared to the third most influential college-choice component, “Relationship with College Football/Athletic Department Personnel” ($M = 2.01$; $SD = 0.560$). Therefore, “Football Athletic Success” was significantly more influential than all other college-choice components, with the exception of “Football Characteristics at the College” ($M = 2.12$; $SD = 0.609$), for all defensive participants in the study. The least influential component, “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Individuals,” exerted significantly less influence on defensive players as compared to all other college-choice components, as observed by a difference in means of at least 0.39.

RQ 3A: Differences in College-Choice Components – Ethnicity Considerations

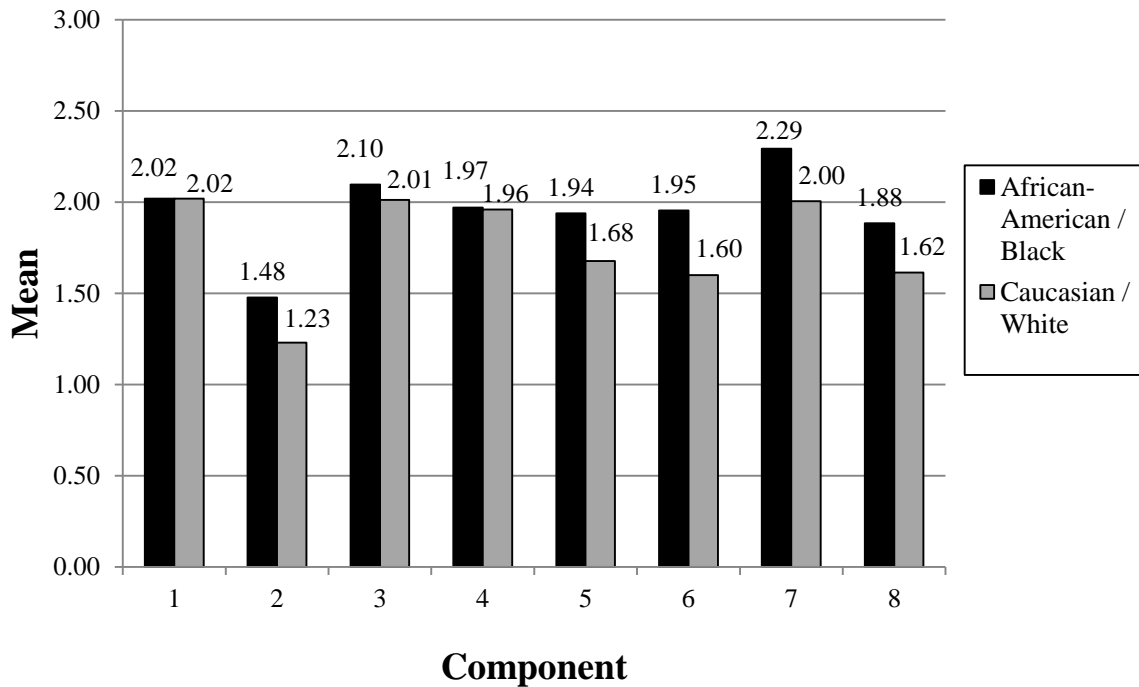
A two by eight mixed-model repeated measures ANOVA was employed to test if there was a significant interaction effect between the component means and ethnic samples. If the mixed-model ANOVA produced a significant interaction effect, a Tukey post hoc was calculated to test if there was a significant difference between the samples within each component.

The repeated measures ANOVA violated the sphericity assumption, therefore the Greenhouse-Geisser was observed to test if there was a significant interaction effect between ethnicity and component. A p value of 0.076 was produced, indirectly meaning that the difference in means between the samples within each component were not statistically

significant. However, the p value was approaching significance so it is possible that a larger sample, which would have resulted in more power, would have rendered a significant interaction effect. Consequently, differences between the means within each component is worthy of analysis. Figure 4.1 illustrates the means of each sample, Black and White, within each college-choice component.

Based on Figure 4.1, Black respondents were more influenced than White respondents for all of the eight college-choice components. “Miscellaneous Personal Preferences” produced the largest difference in means, 0.35, between Black and White respondents. “Football Athletic Success” and “Recruiting Experience” reported the second and third largest differences in means, 0.29 and 0.27 respectively. The college-choice components that produced the smallest difference between the means of Black and White respondents were “Relationships with College Football/Athletic Department Personnel” and “Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College,” with margins of less than 0.001 and 0.01 respectively.

Figure 4.1. Differences in College-Choice Components – Ethnicity Considerations
(Black, $N = 52$; White, $N = 21$)



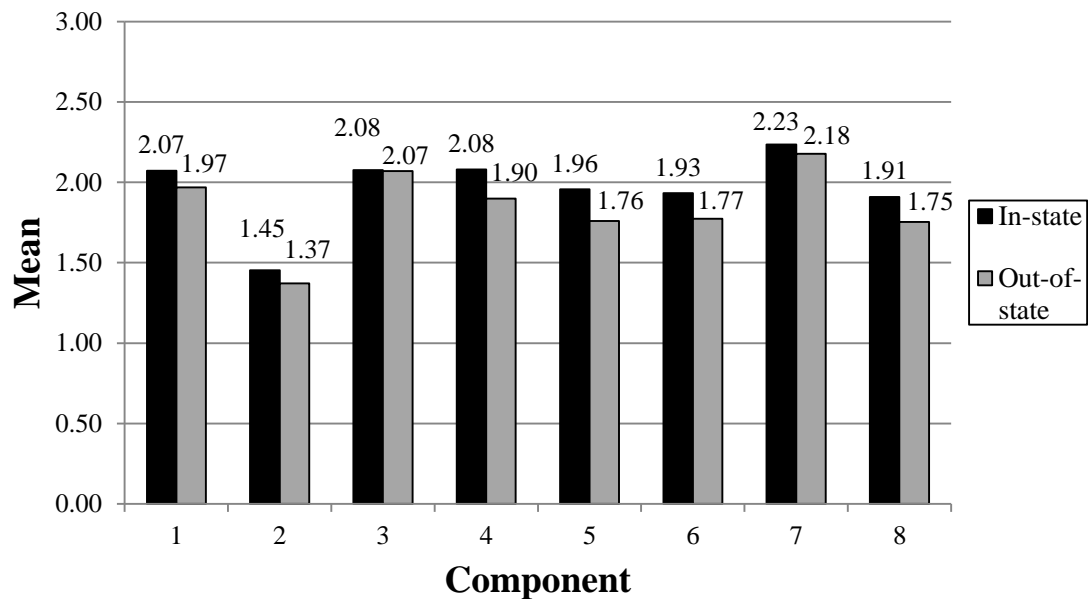
COMPONENT KEY	
1	Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel
2	Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals
3	Football Characteristics at the College
4	Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College
5	Demographic Characteristics of the College
6	Miscellaneous Personal Preferences
7	Football Athletic Success
8	Recruiting Experience

RQ 3B: Differences in College-Choice Components – Residency Status

A two by eight mixed-model repeated measures ANOVA was used to test if there was a significant interaction effect between the component means and residency status. The repeated measures ANOVA violated the sphericity assumption, therefore the Greenhouse-Geisser was observed to test if there was a significant interaction effect between residency

status and component. A p value of 0.740 was produced, indirectly implying that the difference in means between the samples within each component were not statistically significant. As a result, a Tukey post hoc was not calculated to test if there was a significant difference between the samples within each component. Figure 4.2 illustrates the means of each sample, in-state and out-of-state, within each college-choice component.

Figure 4.2. Differences in College-Choice Components – Residency Status
(In-state, $N = 33$; Out-of-state, $N = 44$)



COMPONENT KEY	
1	Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel
2	Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals
3	Football Characteristics at the College
4	Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College
5	Demographic Characteristics of the College
6	Miscellaneous Personal Preferences
7	Football Athletic Success
8	Recruiting Experience

Based on Figure 4.2, in-state respondents were more influenced than out-of-state respondents for all of the eight college-choice components. “Demographic Characteristics of the College” produced the largest difference in means, 0.197, between the in-state and out-of-state samples. “Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College” reported the second largest difference in means of 0.181. The college-choice components that produced the smallest difference between the means between in-state and out-of-state respondents were “Football Characteristics at the College” and “Football Athletic Success,” with margins of 0.006 and 0.058 respectively.

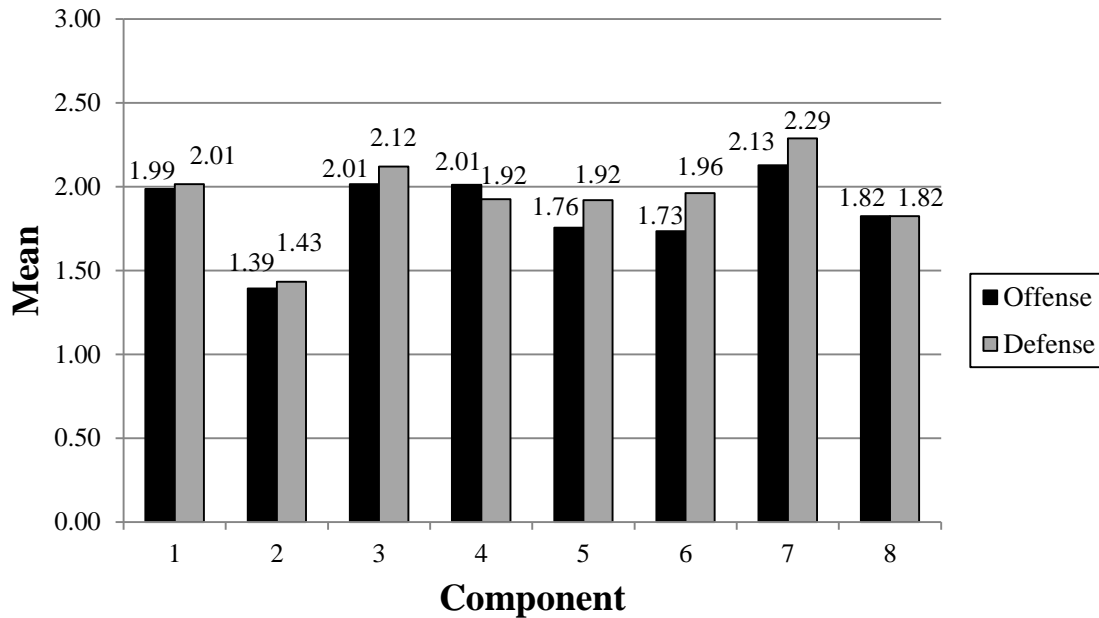
RQ 3C: Differences in College-Choice Components – Football Position

A two by eight mixed-model repeated measures ANOVA was used to test if there was a significant interaction effect between the component means and football position. The repeated measures ANOVA violated the sphericity assumption, therefore the Greenhouse-Geisser was observed to test if there was a significant interaction effect between residency status and component. A *p* value of 0.258 was produced, indirectly implying that the difference in means between the samples within each component were not statistically significant. As a result, a Tukey post hoc was not calculated to test if there was a significant difference between the samples within each component. Figure 4.3 illustrates the means of each sample, offense and defense, within each college-choice component.

Based on Figure 4.3, respondents who played defense were more influenced than offensive players for six of the eight college-choice components. The only college-choice component that offense recorded higher influence was “Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College,” and both groups of offensive and defensive respondents rated “Recruiting Experience” the exact same degree of influence. “Miscellaneous Personal

Preference” produced the largest difference in means, 0.227, between the offensive and defensive samples. “Demographic Characteristics of the College” and “Football Athletic Success” reported the second and third largest differences in means, with margins of 0.163 and 0.161 respectively. The college-choice components that produced the smallest difference between the means between offensive and defensive respondents were “Recruiting Experience” and “Relationships with College Football/Athletic Department Personnel,” with margins of less than 0.001 and 0.006 respectively.

Figure 4.3. Differences in College-Choice Components – Football Position
(Offense, $N = 37$; Defense, $N = 37$)



COMPONENT KEY	
1	- Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel
2	- Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals
3	- Football Characteristics at the College
4	- Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College
5	- Demographic Characteristics of the College
6	- Miscellaneous Personal Preferences
7	- Football Athletic Success
8	- Recruiting Experience

RQ 4: Most Influential College-Choice Factors – All Respondents

Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the most influential college-choice factors of participants during the college-selection process. A mean was calculated for each factor based on the responses of the entire sample. The means were then sorted in descending order and supplemented with percentages for each response, as depicted in Table 4.8, to reveal the top 15 most influential college-choice factors of the target population.

Table 4.8

Most Influential College-Choice Factors – All Respondents (N = 77)

College-Choice Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% of “Extremely Influential” (HIGH) Responses	% of “Moderately Influential” (MEDIUM) Responses	% of “Slightly Influential” (LOW) Responses	% of “Not Influential” (NONE) Responses
Opportunity to begin a good career other than playing professional football	2.60	.717	70.67	21.33	5.33	2.67
Total academic value of the college's degree	2.53	.683	63.16	26.32	10.53	0.00
Opportunity to win a conference championship	2.51	.681	61.04	28.57	10.39	0.00
Reputation of the college head coach	2.49	.778	64.00	24.00	9.33	2.67
Opportunity to play in a bowl game	2.46	.791	61.84	25.00	10.53	2.63
Academic reputation of the college	2.41	.737	54.67	33.33	10.67	1.33
Relationship with your potential college position coach(es)	2.40	.799	57.14	28.57	11.69	2.60
Degree programs and academic courses offered	2.37	.709	50.00	36.84	13.16	0.00
Playing in front of large crowds and/or a sold-out stadium	2.34	.841	53.33	33.33	8.00	5.33
Opportunity to win a national championship	2.33	.811	52.00	32.00	13.33	2.67
Increased chances of playing professionally (ex: NFL, Canadian, Arena)	2.32	.941	56.58	26.32	9.21	7.89
Quality of the football center's facilities	2.31	.782	46.75	41.56	7.79	3.90
Location of the college (town, city, and/or state)	2.27	.853	48.05	36.36	10.39	5.19
Overall campus atmosphere and environment	2.25	.917	50.67	30.67	12.00	6.67
Opportunity to finish in the top 25 in the polls (nationally ranked) every year	2.24	.836	44.00	41.33	9.33	5.33
Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)						

The college-choice factor that proved to be the most influential to all respondents participating in the research was “Opportunity to begin a good career other than playing professional football” ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.717$). Moreover, “Opportunity to begin a good career other than playing professional football” was rated extremely influential by over 70% of respondents. The second most influential college-choice factor was “Total academic value of the college’s degree,” registering a mean of 2.53 with a standard deviation of 0.683. Additionally, over 89% of respondents rated “Total academic value of the college’s degree” at least moderately influential. Of the college-choice factors ranking third through tenth, six factors were related to football and the other two were academically related, which were “Academic reputation of the college” ($M = 2.41$; $SD = 0.737$) and “Degree programs and academic courses offered” ($M = 2.37$; $SD = 0.709$), ranking sixth and eighth respectively. A complete listing of the responses for all college-choice factors is presented in Appendix F.

Results from the study offer valuable insights for coaches and athletic administrators who are committed to offering and enrolling student-athletes that are a great fit for their team, athletic department, and institution. Developing an intentional brand starts with investing in an institution’s personnel. Therefore, it is critical to analyze the data and highlight valuable discoveries that coaches and athletic administrators can apply when evaluating and hosting prospective student-athletes during the college-selection process.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Athletic administrators and coaches can use this study's results to develop, enhance, and market the brand(s) of individual teams, an athletic department, and institution. In essence, when coaches understand specific college-choice factors, they are provided with an opportunity to build their program's brand with prospective student-athletes, and as a result they can enhance fit for all parties involved in the recruiting process (Canale, 1996).

Moreover, it is critical for athletic administrators and coaches to use this examination to enhance their efficiency during the recruiting process as well as gain a better understanding of how to effectively cater to the wants and needs of their student-athletes (Davis, 1975; Mixon et al., 2004). Implications of this process will be discussed in-depth to further illustrate the benefits of understanding and leveraging the reasons why student-athletes select an institution.

Implications of Cumulative College-Choice Components

Coaches and athletic administrators who understand the most influential reasons why prospective student-athletes choose their academic institutions are better able to attract recruits to enroll at their respective institution by engaging in effective relationship marketing with prospective student-athletes (Johnson et al., 2009; Kotler, 2004). Furthermore, by highlighting the most influential college-choice components, coaches can emphasize the elements that will maximize student-athlete's expected discounted lifetime capital (Dumond et al., 2008).

The college-choice component that proved to be the most influential to prospective student-athletes who signed an Athletic Scholarship Agreement during the college-selection process was “Football Athletic Success.” This aforementioned component was comprised of the following college-choice factors: bowl game appearances in the last 5 years, opportunity to win a conference championship, opportunity to win a national championship, opportunity to play in a bowl game, and opportunity to finish in the top 25 in the polls every year. Furthermore, when focusing on the individual items within “Football Athletic Success,” the data illustrated that the factors “Opportunity to win a conference championship” and “Opportunity to play in a bowl game” recorded the highest means, 2.58 and 2.54 respectively.

Arguably the most significant finding is that “Football Athletic Success” was significantly more influential than “Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics.” However, “Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College” ranked fourth behind “Football Characteristics at the College” (ranked second) and “Relationships with College Football/Athletic Department Personnel” (ranked third), which provided valuable insights that highlight the desires of the target sample. Thus, the college-choice component results supported the notion that these student-athletes were most influenced by athletically-based factors.

According to the theories of lifetime human capital, it was not surprising that three athletically-related college-choice components were more influential than the academically-related college-choice component for a sample of NCAA Division I FBS football student-athletes (Dumond et al., 2008). For example, it is expected that the sample of student-athletes that participated in the study chose a school based on which program and institution would

best prepare their marketability in the labor market (Dumond et al.). Consequently, the results of this study suggested that the target population was significantly more influenced by factors that could prepare them for the professional football labor market (immediate) rather than the broader labor market (long-term).

Also, due to the fact that three athletically-related college-choice components were more influential than the academically-related college-choice component, it is important for athletic administrators and coaches to have a structure in place to emphasize the academic balance that is necessitated amid the football culture in an institution of higher education. Mentors in leadership positions must use the results of this study to promote the genuine pursuit of a college education and not just a diploma. Additionally, personnel in leadership positions must utilize their short four to five years with football student-athletes to make strides to address the myopia of a long-term professional football playing career.

Although coaches and athletic administrators should accept accountability for the student-athletes they recruit by facilitating student-athlete development, student-athletes must also assume responsibility and face the realization that all playing careers come to an end. Therefore, in order to enhance the quality and brand of their “product,” coaches and athletic administrators must foster and encourage their student-athletes to attain a meaningful education that will lay them a foundation for the rest of their lives, long after their football playing career is over (Johnson et al., 2009; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Lawlor, 1998). This study offers other valuable insights based on segmented samples of the target population.

Implications of Segmented (Independent Samples) College-Choice Components

This study was designed to gain demographic and personal information from respondents to analyze the most influential college-choice components of independent

samples (i.e., Black, White, in-state, out-of-state, offense, and defense). The first observation was that “Football Athletic Success” and “Football Characteristics at the College” were the only college-choice components to consistently be rated at least moderately influential by ALL samples ($M > 2.00$). This observation confirmed the results from the cumulative analysis which reported “Football Athletic Success” and “Football Characteristics at the College” as the most influential and second most influential college-choice components respectively.

However, the White sample was the only one of the six samples that did *not* rate “Football Athletic Success” as their most influential college-choice component during the college-selection process. In fact, the “Football Athletic Success” ranked third most influential behind “Relationships with College Football/Athletic Department Personnel” (rated as the most influential college-choice component) and “Football Characteristics at the College” (rated as the second most influential college-choice component). As a result, it is critical that coaches and support staff who assist with recruiting White football student-athletes highlight the importance of establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with their student-athletes (Berry, 1983). An example of developing meaningful relationships is for football personnel to market their program, athletic department, and university in a manner that will establish trust between the football personnel and the recruit, particularly regarding how the institution can add the most value to the recruits’ long-term human capital (Dumond et al., 2008).

Due to an interest in gaining a better understanding of the most influential academically-related factors, the researcher focused on the “Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College” college-choice component of the individual samples.

“Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College” was rated highest by in-state respondents, which may be explained by the fact that student-athletes who identified themselves as in-state are generally more aware of the academic and student affairs reputation of the institution. Interestingly enough, out-of-state respondents rated “Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College” the lowest of all six segmented samples. A possible logic for out-of-state student-athletes rating the academic college-choice component lowest relative to the other samples is that they virtually had no affinity for the institution since they identified another state as their “home” state. Consequently, out-of-state recruits should be educated on the academically-related factors during the college-selection process so that they can assure they choose a college that is a great fit for them considering all characteristics of an institution, not just football-related aspects.

The college-choice component “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Personnel” consistently ranked least influential among all college-choice components. However, the factors that comprised this component must not be ignored. For example, “Influence from parents/guardians” was rated the most influential college-choice factor of the “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Personnel” component for all samples. Therefore, given the influence that parents/guardians have on their children, it is imperative for coaches and athletic administrators to employ the theory of relationship marketing beyond the recruits to include the recruits’ parents/guardians as well (Berry, 1983).

Differences in College-Choice Components

Statistical analyses did not report any statistically significant interaction effects between the college-choice components and personal characteristics (i.e., ethnicity, residency

status, and football position). However, empirical observations presented discoveries that are worth highlighting. For example, five of the eight college-choice components produced differences in means greater than or equal to 0.25 between the Black and White samples. These five components included “Miscellaneous Personal Preferences” ($MD = 0.35$), “Football Athletic Success” ($MD = 0.29$), “Demographic Characteristics of the College” ($MD = 0.26$), “Recruiting Experience” ($MD = 0.26$), and “Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Department Personnel” ($MD = 0.25$). As a result, athletic department personnel must recognize that differences exist across various components between the college-choice factors of Black and White recruits, and adjust their personal relationships accordingly.

Other than the five components which produced mean differences greater than 0.25 between Black and White samples, no other differences in component means between groups within residency status or football position exceeded 0.25. In fact, the two highest differences in means when focusing on residency status and football position were “Miscellaneous Personal Preferences” ($MD = 0.23$) between offensive and defensive participants and “Demographic Characteristics of the College” ($MD = 0.20$) between in-state and out-of-state respondents. Generally speaking, differences in the residency status and football position of recruits were associated with minor differences in the degree of influence of each of the college-choice components.

Additional empirical observations included the following: Black participants were more influenced than White participants in all eight college-choice components; in-state participants were more influenced than out-of-state participants in all eight college-choice components; and defensive participants were more influenced than offensive participants in

seven of the eight college-choice components. There is no one broad explanation that can clarify these phenomena, but rather it is recommended that future research examine the individual college-choice factors to investigate the elements which are driving the differences between the independent samples.

Implications of Cumulative College-Choice Factors

Although examining the college-choice components offered a snapshot of the most influential categories of participants in the study, it is also appropriate to analyze the individual college-choice factors, regardless of categorization. The top two most influential college-choice factors reported by all 77 respondents were “Opportunity to begin a good career other than playing professional football” ($M = 2.60$; $SD = 0.717$) and “Total academic value of the college’s degree” ($M = 2.53$; $SD = 0.683$). The fact that these two factors topped the list of the 61 possible items confirmed the idea that personnel and programs that are perceived to add the most value to a recruit’s human capital are more likely to be selected concluding the college-selection process. However, one must not ignore the six athletically-related factors that comprised the top 10 most influential college-choice factors.

The most influential athletically-related college-choice factor was “Opportunity to win a conference championship” ($M = 2.51$; $SD = 0.681$), ranking higher than “Reputation of the college head coach,” “Relationship with your potential college position coach(es),” and “Quality of football center’s facilities.” The notion that “Opportunity to win a conference championship” was the most influential athletically-related factor speaks to the value of the bowl culture in college football (since conference champions automatically advance to BCS bowl games). Moreover, “Opportunity to win a conference championship” could help explain the recent shift in conference realignments in which leagues attempt to increase their

membership to at least 12 institutions in order to qualify for a conference championship game. Although there is a multitude of ever-changing factors that influence the college-selection process of prospective student-athletes, it is imperative that athletic administrators and coaches recognize that a balance of academic and athletic-related factors should be emphasized during the recruiting process. The choice to attend college is an investment in a prospective student's human capital. Therefore, coaches and athletic administrators should collaborate to develop an intentional brand identity that will attract recruits who are a great fit for their institution and who will enhance the brand by committing to excellence in the classroom, in the competitive arena, and in the community (Gladden et al., 1998).

Practical Implications

A fundamental implication of this research is that in order for athletic administrators and coaches to build an intentional brand, they must first agree to the elements that will help them build and develop a desired brand identity (Aaker, 1991; Gladden et al., 1998). Next, athletic administrators and coaches must commit to putting personnel in place (i.e., assistant coaches, support staff, and student-athletes) that will endorse the brand identity (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). When coaches have an understanding of the most influential college-choice factors, they are essentially provided with a platform to engage in effective relationship marketing because they know the foundational elements that are most important to prospective student-athletes (Johnson et al., 2009; Kotler, 2004). As a result, athletic administrators and coaches will not only have personnel with a unified mission, but they will be able to improve the efficiency of the recruiting process.

Perhaps the most visible figures in an athletic department are head coaches, particularly due to the fact that they are most often the long-term presence of individual sport

programs (as opposed to student-athletes who have a limited “shelf life” limited to four playing seasons of eligibility). Therefore, head coaches assume primary responsibility for the success of their team’s student-athletes. Although different coaches define “success” differently, to truly build the brand of a program, the researcher recommends that coaches have a structure in place that allows his or her student-athletes to engage in personal development activities once they are on campus. Similarly, it is critical that coaches model the expected behaviors so that student-athletes are reinforced the value of personal development in areas outside of the athletic arena. Such a structure would allow student-athletes to better prepare for their future life after their playing career is over.

Generalizations suggest that the most influential college-choice components were athletically related. However, dissecting the most influential components revealed an interesting discovery of the most influential college-choice factors. The results indicated that four of the top eight factors were academically-related which suggested that participants selected a college based on valuing elements of the educational experience (i.e., “Opportunity to begin a good career other than playing professional football,” “Total academic value of the college’s degree,” “Academic reputation of the college,” and “Degree programs and academic courses offered”). Therefore, football coaches and support staff should make a sincere effort to foster the academic pursuits of their student-athletes. Furthermore, athletic administrators should have a structure in place that holds their personnel accountable to meeting the academic expectations of their student-athletes.

Analyzing the most influential college-choice components offered controversial evidence that football student-athletes competing at the highest level may not be committed to the mission of higher education, but rather generally more influenced by athletically-

related components. Moreover, a high majority of football student-athletes are under-prepared for higher education and are often labeled as “special admits” since their standardized academic scores (i.e., SAT, ACT, and GPA) are lower than peer applicants who are admitted into the institution. Therefore, coaches must move past only evaluating prospective student-athletes based on their height, weight, and speed and also consider recruits’ academic fit at their respective institution. If personnel, particularly head and assistant coaches, do not face the reality of their recruits’ priorities and genuinely promote other avenues of personal development, then members of their team are in danger of leaving school, with or without a degree, deprived of a meaningful education.

Although there are multiple individuals and elements that influence a recruit regarding which college to attend, the onus of decision ultimately falls on the prospective student-athlete. For that reason, recruits should reflect on their wants and needs before being beginning the recruiting process. If a model of self-evaluation was utilized by recruits then they would be better able to identify a college that is the best fit for their personal development.

Future Research

Upon reflecting on the results and implications of this research study, there are numerous opportunities for future research. One potential extension of the research would be to survey football players at additional colleges. A broader scope of participants would allow for one to make comparisons between different colleges within the same athletic conference, differences between athletic conferences, and differences between different NCAA divisions. Similarly, student-athletes from other sports could participate in the study and the most influential college-choice factors could be compared between sport and between genders.

To supplement the current research, a longitudinal study could be employed to survey incoming student-athletes. An entrance questionnaire would examine the college-choice factors and an exit questionnaire could inquire about the student-athletes' overall experience and preparation for life after sports. A formal exit questionnaire would likely offer valuable feedback to develop strategies that would enhance the student-athlete experience for future student-athletes.

An additional avenue to extend this research is to focus on perceptions of athletic administrators, coaches, and support staff. For example, an identical list of college-choice factors could be presented to administrators and coaches in which they would be asked how influential do they think the college-choice factors were, in general, to their team's student-athletes during the college-selection process. By comparing student-athletes' responses with staff's perceptions, the researcher can evaluate best fit principles as well as assess whether staff are meeting the wants, needs, and expectations of their student-athletes.

A follow-up study that could be performed using the raw data collected in this research would be to perform an in-depth examination of the individual college-choice factors. The current research only examined the cumulative means of college-choice factors, but an additional study could identify and compare the college-choice factors of independent samples. Also, the college-choice components could be inspected to identify which factors drive the means of the college-choice components of independent samples. Moreover, respondents could be segmented into additional samples which would allow for further analysis of the most influential college-choice components/factors. If the participants were segmented in this manner then coaches could get a better understanding of the most influential factors of a precise category of recruits. Although there are other opportunities to

expand this line of research, it is important to focus on the conclusions that can be drawn from the current study.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, a successful athletic department adds value to a college. However, “success” must be defined by individual institutions, whether that is winning records, high graduation rates, revenue generation, or elite life-skills programming. As athletic department personnel define “success,” they are developing their brand identity (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Lawlor, 1998). Possibly the most effective method of building a desired brand is to hire coaches that embody the preferred philosophies and they will in turn recruit student-athletes who are a great fit for their institution. The results of this study contribute to enhancing the efficiency of the recruiting process by acknowledging the most influential factors during the college-selection process. Thus, coaches and administrators can use the results as a platform to engage in effective relationship marketing with prospective student-athletes (Johnson et al., 2009).

Although coaches are often pressured to feel like they have to win at all costs, the focus of developing student-athletes should not be compromised. Coaches serve as invaluable mentors to their student-athletes and coaches should strive to add value to their student-athletes’ personal development and ultimately their perceived human capital (Dumond et al., 2008). Athletic administrators and coaches who invest in improving the human capital of their student-athletes are likely to produce alumni who place a high value on their college experience and, in return, enhance the brand of the sport program, athletic department, and institution.

Appendix A: Sample Athletic Scholarship Agreement (ASA)

[University]
Athletic Scholarship Agreement

Date Issued: _____ Sport: _____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ M.I.: _____

PID (if applicable): _____ Last 4 digits of Social Security Number (if no PID): _____ Date of Birth: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Period of Award: ☐ One Academic Year _____ ☐ Fall Only _____ ☐ Spring Only _____

CONDITIONS OF FINANCIAL AID

1. This award covers the following:

Full	Tuition	Fees	Room	Board	Books

_____ % of Full Grant (to be applied first to tuition and fees)

Other explanation of award: _____

2. The award is subject to your fulfillment of the admissions requirements of [university] and the initial eligibility requirements of [university], the [athletic conference] and the NCAA.

3. **This award is not automatically renewed.** Per NCAA regulations, scholarships are awarded on a one-year basis (see "Period of Award" above) and are generally renewed for 4 academic years (pending the recommendation of the head coach at the end of each academic year), unless otherwise described above. Your eligibility for renewal of this award is subject to [university] and NCAA renewal policies at the end of the term (which include, but are not limited to, your fulfillment of [university], [athletic conference], and NCAA progress-toward-degree requirements).

4. If this award is issued with a National Letter of Intent (NLI), it must be signed and returned in accordance with the NLI procedures.

SIGNED _____ SIGNED _____

Director of Athletics Director of Financial Aid

If you wish to accept this award, please sign and return 1 original signed copy of this form. The second copy is for your files.

ACCEPTANCE By signing this offer of financial aid, I understand that:

- I will become ineligible for intercollegiate competition if I receive any financial assistance other than that authorized by the NCAA and approved by the Compliance Office and the Office of Scholarships and Student Aid. It is my responsibility to make these offices aware of any outside aid for which I am eligible. I understand that my athletics scholarship may be reduced or cancelled if I receive institutional and/or outside financial aid.
- Summer and fifth-year athletics scholarships require the recommendation of the head coach and the academic counselor and must be approved by the Senior Associate Athletics Director.
- If I become ill or am injured while participating in my sport at [university] and am unable to continue participating, my athletics scholarship will be continued, subject to [university] and NCAA rules and regulations.
- If I voluntarily withdraw or am suspended from [university], my athletics scholarship will be discontinued. Reinstatement of my athletics scholarship is not guaranteed upon my return to [university].
- My scholarship may be reduced or cancelled at any time if I: a) become ineligible for intercollegiate competition in my sport, b) voluntarily withdraw from my sport, c) provide inaccurate information on my Application for Admission, ASA, and/or NLI, or d) engage in misconduct warranting disciplinary penalty (e.g., violate team, UNC, ACC, or NCAA regulations, am arrested for or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony, etc.).
- I am required to participate in the [university] Department of Athletics Substance Abuse, Education, Testing, and Counseling Program for Intercollegiate Athletics, and I am subject to the policies and procedures of the program, including those regarding athletics scholarships.
- I must conduct myself in accordance with all [university], [athletic conference], and NCAA regulations. In addition, I must abide by all rules and regulations set by the Department of Athletics and my head coach. This includes, but is not limited to, participation in intercollegiate competition, practice, training, conditioning, and required meetings. Failure to follow these regulations may result in the cancellation of this award.
- Any modification or cancellation of this award must be in compliance with [university], [athletic conference], and NCAA legislation.

SIGNED _____ Date _____

Student's Signature

SIGNED _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature

Appendix B: Sample National Letter of Intent (NLI) (part 1 of 3)



2011-12

Administered by the NCAA Eligibility Center on behalf of the Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA).

Do not sign prior to 7 a.m. (local time) on the following dates or after the final signing date listed for each sport.

<u>SPORT</u> (Place an "X" on the proper line.)	<u>INITIAL SIGNING DATE</u>	<u>FINAL SIGNING DATE</u>
_____ Basketball (Early Period)	November 10, 2010	November 17, 2010
_____ Basketball (Regular Period)	April 13, 2011	May 18, 2011
_____ Football (Midyear JC Transfer)	December 15, 2010	January 15, 2011
_____ Football (Regular Period)	February 2, 2011	April 1, 2011
_____ Field Hockey, Soccer, Men's Water Polo	February 2, 2011	August 1, 2011
_____ Track and Field/Cross Country		
_____ All Other Sports (Early Period)	November 10, 2010	November 17, 2010
_____ All Other Sports (Regular Period)	April 13, 2011	August 1, 2011

IMPORTANT - READ CAREFULLY

It is important to read this entire document before signing it. One copy is to be retained by you and the other copy is to be returned to the institution, which will file a copy with the appropriate conference office. Copies transmitted by facsimile or electronically are considered to be valid. The National Letter of Intent (NLI) is a voluntary program with regard to both institutions and prospective student-athletes. No prospective student-athlete or parent is required to sign the NLI for a prospective student-athlete to receive athletics aid and participate in intercollegiate athletics.

- Initial Enrollment in Four-Year Institution.** This NLI applies only to prospective student-athletes who will be entering four-year institutions for the first time as full-time students. It is also permissible for 4-2-4 transfer student-athletes who are graduating from a two-year college to sign the NLI. No prospective student-athlete enrolling at midyear shall sign an NLI, with the exception of midyear two-year college transfer student-athletes in football, who must graduate at midyear for this NLI to be valid.
- Financial Aid Requirement.** At the time I sign this NLI, I must receive a written offer of athletics financial aid for the entire 2011-12 academic year from the institution named in this document. The offer must list the terms, conditions and amount of the athletics aid award. (A midyear football two-year college transfer student-athlete must receive a written offer of athletics financial aid for the remainder of the 2010-11 academic year. If the institution does not renew the athletics aid for the following academic year, the student-athlete must be released of the NLI). In order for this NLI to be valid, my parent/legal guardian and I must sign the NLI and I must also sign the offer of athletics aid (see institutional policy for parent/legal guardian signature) prior to submission to the institution named in this document, and any other stated conditions must also be met. If the conditions stated on the financial aid offer are not met, this NLI shall be declared null and void.
 - Professional Sports Contract.** If I sign a professional sports contract in the sport in which I signed the NLI, I remain bound by the NLI in all sports, even if NCAA rules prohibit the institution named in this document from providing me with athletics financial aid.
- Provisions of Letter Satisfied.**
 - One-Year Attendance Requirement.** The terms of this NLI shall be satisfied if I attend the institution named in this document for one academic year (two semesters or three quarters) as a full-time student.
 - Two-Year College Graduation.** After signing this NLI while in high school or during my first year of full-time enrollment at a two-year college, the terms of this NLI will be satisfied if I graduate from the two-year college.
- Basic Penalty.** I understand that if I do not attend the institution named in this document for one full academic year and I enroll in another institution participating in the NLI program, I may not compete in intercollegiate athletics until I have completed one full academic year in residence at the latter institution. Further, I understand I shall be charged with the loss of one season of intercollegiate athletics competition in all sports. This is in addition to any seasons of competition expended at any institution.
- Early Signing Period Penalties.** Prospective student-athletes who will participate in football are prohibited from signing an NLI during the early signing period. A student who signs an NLI during the early period in a sport other than football will be ineligible for practice and competition in football during the first year of enrollment at an NLI member institution and shall forfeit one season of competition in football. In circumstances where a student's primary sport is not football, but the student anticipates participating in football, the student should delay signing an NLI until either the football signing period or during the regular signing period for all other sports.
- Release Request and Appeal Process.** In the event I wish to be released from my NLI obligation, the NLI release request form and appeal process information can be reviewed on the NLI Web site at www.national-letter.org. I understand that the NLI Policy and Review Committee has been authorized to issue interpretations, settle disputes and consider petitions for complete release from the provisions of the NLI when

2011-12 - 1

Appendix B: Sample National Letter of Intent (NLI) (part 2 of 3)

extenuating circumstances are determined to exist and the signing institution denies my request for release. I further understand the Committee's decision may be appealed to the NLI Appeals Committee, whose decision shall be final and binding.

7. Letter Becomes Null and Void. This NLI shall be declared null and void if any of the following occur:

- a. Admissions Requirement.** This NLI shall be declared null and void if the institution named in this document notifies me in writing that I have been denied admission or, by the opening day of classes in fall 2011, has failed to provide me with written notice of admission, provided I have submitted a complete admission application. It is my obligation to provide, by request, my academic records and an application for admission to the signing institution. If I fail to submit the necessary academic credentials and/or application to determine an admission decision prior to September 1, the NLI shall be declared null and void. If discovered I purposely failed to provide all necessary academic credentials to the institution, the NLI office per its review may determine the NLI remain binding.

This NLI shall be rendered null and void if I am eligible for admission, but the institution named in this document defers admission to a subsequent term. However, this NLI remains binding if I defer my admission.

- b. Eligibility Requirements.** This NLI shall be declared null and void if, by the opening day of classes in fall 2011, I have not met (1) the NCAA initial eligibility requirements; (2) the NCAA, conference or institution's requirements for financial aid to student-athletes; or (3) the two-year college transfer requirements, provided I have submitted all necessary documents for eligibility determination.

(1) This NLI shall be rendered null and void if I become a nonqualifier (per Bylaw 14.3). This NLI remains valid if I am a partial qualifier per NCAA Division II Bylaw 14.3.2.1 unless I do not meet the institution's policies for receipt of athletics aid.

(2) It is my obligation to register with and provide information to the NCAA Eligibility Center. If I fail to submit the necessary documentation for an initial-eligibility decision and have not attended classes at the signing institution, the NLI shall be declared null and void. If discovered I purposely failed to provide all necessary information to the NCAA Eligibility Center, the NLI office per its review may determine the NLI remain binding.

(3) This NLI shall be rendered null and void if I am a midyear football two-year college transfer and I fail to graduate from two-year college at midyear (only for Division I nonqualifier). The NLI remains binding for the following fall term if I graduated, was eligible for admission and financial aid and met the two-year college transfer requirements for competition for the winter or spring term, but chose to delay my admission.

- c. One-Year Absence.** This NLI shall be declared null and void if I have not attended any institution (two-year or four-year) for at least one academic year, provided my request for athletics financial aid for a subsequent fall term is denied by the signing institution. I may still apply this provision if I initially enrolled in an NLI member institution but have been absent for at least one academic year. To apply this provision, I must file with the appropriate conference office a statement from the director of athletics at the institution named in this document that such athletics financial aid will not be available for the requested fall term.

- d. Service in the U.S. Armed Forces/Church Mission.** This NLI shall be declared null and void after serving active duty with the armed forces of the United States or an official church mission for at least 12 months.

- e. Discontinued Sport.** This NLI shall be declared null and void if the institution named in the document discontinues my sport.

- f. Recruiting Rules Violation.** If eligibility reinstatement by the NCAA student-athlete reinstatement staff is necessary due to NCAA and/or conference recruiting rules violations, the institution must notify me that I have an option to have the NLI declared null and void due to the rules violation. It is my decision to have the NLI remain valid or to have the NLI declared null and void, permitting me to be recruited and not be subject to NLI penalties.

8. Recruiting Ban After Signing. I understand all participating conferences and institutions are obligated to respect my signing and shall cease to recruit me after my signing this NLI. I shall notify any recruiter who contacts me that I have signed an NLI. Once I enroll in the institution named in this document, the NLI Recruiting Ban is no longer in effect and I shall be governed by applicable NCAA bylaws.



9. 14-Day Signing Deadline. If my parent/legal guardian and I fail to sign this NLI and accompanying offer of athletics financial aid (see institutional policy for parent/legal guardian signature) within 14 days after the date of issuance, it will be invalid. In that event, another NLI may be issued within the appropriate signing period. **Signing Deadline (November Only):** NLI must be signed between the dates of November 10-17, 2010 (the 14-day signing deadline is not applicable during the November signing period). Additionally, the institution must file the NLI with its conference office within 21 days of the date of final signature, otherwise, the NLI is invalid.

10. Statute of Limitations. This NLI is in full force and effect for a period of four years, commencing with the date I sign this NLI. I am subject to the NLI penalty if I do not fulfill the agreement; however, once four years has elapsed, the NLI is no longer binding.

11. Coaching Changes. I understand I have signed this NLI with the institution and not for a particular sport or coach. If a coach leaves the institution or the sports program (e.g., not retained, resigns), I remain bound by the provisions of this NLI. I understand it is not uncommon for a coach to leave his or her coaching position.

12. Coaching Contact Prohibited at Time of Signing. A coach or an institutional representative may not hand deliver this NLI off campus or be present off campus at the time I sign the NLI per NCAA rules. This NLI may be delivered by express mail, courier service, regular mail, e-mail or facsimile machine. An NLI submitted to an institution electronically shall be considered a valid copy.

Appendix B: Sample National Letter of Intent (NLI) (part 3 of 3)

 NATIONAL LETTER of INTENT		2011-2012
Name of Prospective Student-Athlete _____		
<small>Last</small>	<small>First</small>	<small>Middle Initial</small>
Permanent Address _____		
<small>City</small>	<small>State</small>	<small>Postal Code</small>
<small>Country</small>		
Prospective Student-Athlete's NCAA ID _____ <small>(must be registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center and on the Institutional Request List)</small>		Date of Birth _____
Submission of this NLI has been authorized by:		
SIGNED _____ <small>Director of Athletics (or designee)</small>		_____ <small>Date Issued to Prospective Student-Athlete</small>
_____ <small>Sport</small>		For Institutional Use Only: <input type="checkbox"/> Two-year college transfer <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 Qualifier <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 Nonqualifier <input type="checkbox"/> Two-year college graduate Expected graduation date _____
This is to certify my decision to enroll at _____ <div style="text-align: right;"><small>Name of Institution</small></div>		
<p>I certify that I have read all terms and conditions included in this document. I have discussed them with the coach and/or other staff representatives of the institution named above, and I fully understand, accept and agree to be bound by them. I understand that signing this NLI is voluntary and I am not required to sign the NLI to receive athletics aid and participate in intercollegiate athletics. Additionally, I give my consent to the signing institution, to disclose to authorized representatives of its athletics conference (if any), the NCAA, the NCAA Eligibility Center and the NLI Office any documents or information pertaining to my NLI signing. Further, I give my consent to the NLI Office to disclose my name and personally identifiable information from my education records to a third party (including but not limited to the media) as necessary to correct any inaccuracies reported by the media or related to my NLI signing, without such disclosure constituting a violation of my rights, including my rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.</p> <p>If I falsify any part of this NLI, or if I have knowledge that my parent or legal guardian falsified any part of this NLI, I understand I shall forfeit the first year of my athletics competition at any NLI participating institution.</p> <p>My signature on this NLI nullifies any agreements, oral or otherwise, which would release me from the conditions stated within this NLI.</p>		
SIGNED _____ <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div><small>Prospective Student-Athlete Signature</small></div> <div><small>Signing Date (Mth/Day/Yr)</small></div> <div><small>Time (A.M. / P.M.)</small> <i>Do not sign prior to 7:00 a.m. (local time) on the initial signing date.</i></div> </div>		
Parent/ legal guardian signature is required if prospective student-athlete has not reached his or her 21st birthday.		
SIGNED _____ <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Parent or <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Guardian Signature (check one)</div> <div><small>Signing Date (Mth/Day/Yr)</small></div> <div><small>Time (A.M. / P.M.)</small> <i>Do not sign prior to 7:00 a.m. (local time) on the initial signing date.</i></div> </div>		
_____ <small>Print Name of Parent/Legal Guardian</small>		_____ <small>Telephone Number (including area code)</small>
Copyright © National Letter of Intent		 <small>Rev. 10/01/2010</small>

Appendix C: College-Choice Component Categorizations (part 1 of 2)

Component 1

CCF	Relationships with College Football/Athletic Dept. Personnel
1	Relationship with college head coach
10	Relationship with potential college teammates
14	Relationship with college position coach(es)
20	Relationship with college assistant coaches other than your position coach
62	Relationship with athletic director / athletic department staff

Component 2

CCF	Influence from Non-College Football/Athletic Dept. Individuals
36	Influence from professors / academic faculty at the college
45	Influence from friends
46	Influence from parents/guardians
47	Influence from family members other than your parents/guardians
50	Influence from other recruits
51	Influence from high school coaches
52	Influence from high school teachers and/or guidance counselor
57	Influence from high school teammates

Component 3

CCF	Football Characteristics at the College
7	Athletic reputation of the football program at the college
12	Reputation of college head coach
13	TV and media exposure for the college, football team, and/or conference
19	Reputation of conduct and behavior of the football team at the college
21	Quality of competition and/or "strength of schedule"
22	Quality of football facilities at the college
23	Number of professional football players associated with the college
25	Brand and/or type of equipment provided to the football team
26	Fan base and "football buzz" at the college
44	Style of offense / defense
56	Quality of practice facilities

Component 4

CCF	Academic & Student Affairs Characteristics of the College
2	Degree programs and courses offered
8	Quality of academic support services and facilities
11	Quality of campus activities offered
17	Quality of student-athlete development programs offered
38	Quality of academic facilities
39	Graduation rate of football players at the college
40	Academic reputation of the college
41	Total academic value of the college's degree
43	Quality of professors and academic faculty at the college
53	College housing options offered

Appendix C: College-Choice Component Categorizations (part 2 of 2)

Component 5

CCF	Demographic Characteristics of the College
3	Location of the college (town, city, or state)
15	Male to female ratio at the college
18	Diversity of students and/or faculty at the college
33	Physical size of college campus
34	Number of students enrolled in the college
58	Overall campus atmosphere and environment
60	Weather and/or climate at the college
63	Student to teacher ratio at the college

Component 6

CCF	Miscellaneous Personal Preferences
4	Opportunity to play immediately
9	Desire to be a "superstar" on the football team
31	Increased chances of playing professionally
32	Desire to play in front of large crowds and/or a sold-out stadium
37	Spiritual guidance, personal faith, and/or religious programs offered
42	Opportunity to begin a career other than playing professional football
48	Wanted to attend a college close to home
49	Wanted to attend a college far away from home
55	Availability of your desired jersey number
59	College nightlife and social activities

Component 7

CCF	Football Athletic Success
6	Bowl game appearances in the last 5 years
27	Opportunity to win a conference championship
28	Opportunity to win a national championship
29	Opportunity to play in a bowl game
35	Opportunity to finish in the top 25 in the polls every year

Component 8

CCF	Recruiting Experience
16	Relationship with college football recruiting coordinator
24	Recruiting visits made to your hometown by the college coaching staff
54	Experience of recruiting trips (official or unofficial) made to the college
61	Recruiting materials you received from the football team

Appendix D: Sample Offer Letter

[DATE]

[Recruit's Name]

[Recruit's Address]

Dear [Recruit]:

[University] offers a tremendous collegiate environment and provides exceptional opportunities to top student-athletes. Your outstanding achievements to date at [high school] have shown the [university] coaching staff that you possess the characteristics and abilities to succeed at the collegiate level, both academically and on the football field.

Because we are confident you are the type of student-athlete who would make a positive impact on our institution and football program, I am excited to offer you an athletic grant-in-aid to attend [university]. This full scholarship offers the maximum amount of athletic aid allowed by NCAA rules – tuition, fees, room, board and books.

It's important for you to remember that you must maintain good academic standing in all of your course work, and in particular, the 16 core courses in order to meet NCAA eligibility. If you have not already done so, you must take the ACT or SAT. A Division I institution may not provide an official expense-paid visit to a prospective student-athlete unless the prospect presents the institution with a test score from a PSAT, SAT, PLAN or ACT taken on a national test date under national testing conditions.

Our coaching staff is extremely excited about the opportunity to build a relationship with you and your family. We will be in contact with you about scheduling an official visit to our campus. During your visit you will have an opportunity to meet our coaching staff, players, professors, academic support staff and supervisors, experience our on-campus environment, and discover the great athletic facilities provided by [university].

Recruiting is a very time-sensitive issue. There are a limited number of scholarships available each year. Accepting a scholarship to attend [university] is a great decision for your future success, academically and athletically. When you know that [university] is the right decision, please call, text or write as soon as possible regarding your acceptance of this scholarship offer. Once you accept this offer you will receive an official letter from the Director of Athletics and the Director of Scholarship and Financial Aid after signing the National Letter of Intent in February [YEAR].

I want to wish you continued success both academically and athletically. Have a great senior year, and remember you're always welcome to visit [university]. We look forward to hearing from you soon and having you help us win a National Championship!

Sincerely,

[University Head Football Coach's Signature]

Appendix E: Survey Instrument (part 1 of 2)

College-Choice Factors of NCAA Division I Football Players at a Southeastern University



Thanks in advance for participating in this study. Participation in the survey implies that you consent to voluntarily participate in the research. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous at all times. Also, you can choose to quit the survey at any time and/or skip any survey question. Thanks again for your time!

Please respond to the following questions relating to your personal characteristics and preferences.

What position do you currently play? Check or circle ALL that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defensive Back (cornerback or safety)
<input type="checkbox"/> Defensive Line (tackle or end)
<input type="checkbox"/> Linebacker
<input type="checkbox"/> Offensive Line (center, guard, or tackle)
<input type="checkbox"/> Quarterback | <input type="checkbox"/> Running Back (or fullback)
<input type="checkbox"/> Specialty (place kicker, punter, place holder, long snapper, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Tight End (or H-back)
<input type="checkbox"/> Wide Receiver (split end or slot) |
|--|--|

Do you see yourself playing professional football at some point in your career?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Where are you from? (What do you consider your "home" state?)

State: _____

What is your race/ethnicity?

- ☐ Black
☐ White
☐ Other, please specify (e.g., other ethnic group, mixed race): _____

When recruited to your current school, were you offered an athletic scholarship?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I was not recruited

What is your current year in school?

- ☐ First (1st) Year
☐ Second (2nd) Year
☐ Third (3rd) Year
☐ Fourth (4th) Year
☐ Fifth (5th) Year or greater
☐ Graduate Student

What types of financial aid do you currently receive?
(Please check or circle ALL that apply)

- ☐ Academic scholarship(s)
☐ Athletic scholarship
☐ Pell Grant
☐ Other type of financial aid (please specify): _____
☐ I do not receive any financial aid

When choosing which college to attend, how influential were the following factors during the college-selection process?

Please check only one (1) box for each question.

	Not Influential (NONE)	Slightly Influential (LOW)	Moderately Influential (MEDIUM)	Extremely Influential (HIGH)	Not Applicable (N/A)
Relationship with the college head coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Degree programs and academic courses offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of the college (town, city, and/or state)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to play immediately	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amount of financial aid offered (either academic, athletic, and/or need-based)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bowl game appearances in the last 5 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletic reputation of the football program at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic support services and facilities at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desire to be a "superstar" on the football team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships with potential college teammates at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of campus activities offered (ex: organizations, clubs, fraternities, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reputation of the college head coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TV and media exposure for the college, football team, and/or conference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship with your potential college position coach(es)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Male to Female ratio at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship with the football team's recruiting coordinator(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of student-athlete development programs and activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity of the college's student body and/or faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reputation of conduct and behavior of the football program at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship with the college's assistant coaches other than your position coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix E: Survey Instrument (part 2 of 2)

	Not Influential (NONE)	Slightly Influential (LOW)	Moderately Influential (MEDIUM)	Extremely Influential (HIGH)	Not Applicable (N/A)
Quality of competition and/or "strength of schedule" (ex: athletic conference, non-conference games, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of the football center's facilities (ex: locker room, players' lounge, training table, athletic training room, weight room, meeting rooms, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of professional players (ex: NFL players) associated with the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of recruiting visits made to your hometown by the college coaches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand and/or type of apparel and equipment provided to the team (ex: Nike, Adidas, Under Armour, Rawlings, Riddell, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fan base and "football buzz" at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to win a conference championship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to win a national championship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to play in a bowl game	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Total cost of attending the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased chances of playing professionally (ex: NFL, Canadian, Arena)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playing in front of large crowds and/or a sold-out stadium	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical size of college campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of students enrolled at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to finish in the top 25 in the polls (nationally ranked) every year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence from professors and/or academic faculty at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiritual guidance, personal faith, and/or religious programs offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of the college campus' academic facilities (ex: classrooms, libraries, labs, unions, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduation rate of football players at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic reputation of the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Total academic value of the college's degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to begin a good career other than playing professional football	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of professors and/or academic faculty at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Style of offense or defense	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence from your friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence from your parents/guardians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence from your family members other than your parents/guardians (ex: brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desire to attend a college close to your hometown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desire to attend a college far away from your hometown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence from other recruits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence from your high school coach(es)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence from your high school teachers and/or guidance counselor(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College housing options offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience of recruiting trips (official and/or unofficial visits) to the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of your desired jersey number on the football team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of practice facilities (indoor and/or outdoor)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Influence from your high school teammates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall campus atmosphere and environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College nightlife and social activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Weather and/or climate at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting materials you received from the football team (ex: media guides, letters, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship with the athletic director and/or college athletic department administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student to teacher ratio at the college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Specifically, what were the three (3) *MOST*** influential factors to you when selecting which college to attend? You may choose from any of the factors previously mentioned or any other factor(s) not listed in this survey.**

Please list in order with "1" being the most influential factor when selecting which college to attend.

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

Are there any other factors that influenced your decision to specifically select your college that were *NOT*** listed in the survey? (OPTIONAL)**

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____
- 4.) _____
- 5.) _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the results from this study, please provide your email address below.

Email Address: _____

I appreciate you taking the time to participate in this research. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Landon Huffman at hlandon@email.unc.edu. Thanks for your time and best of luck this season!

Appendix F: Results of College-Choice Factor Responses (part 1 of 5)

College-Choice Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% of “Extremely Influential” (HIGH) Responses	% of “Moderately Influential” (MEDIUM) Responses	% of “Slightly Influential” (LOW) Responses	% of “Not Influential” (NONE) Responses
Opportunity to begin a good career other than playing professional football	2.60	.717	70.67	21.33	5.33	2.67
Total academic value of the college's degree	2.53	.683	63.16	26.32	10.53	0.00
Opportunity to win a conference championship	2.51	.681	61.04	28.57	10.39	0.00
Reputation of the college head coach	2.49	.778	64.00	24.00	9.33	2.67
Opportunity to play in a bowl game	2.46	.791	61.84	25.00	10.53	2.63
Academic reputation of the college	2.41	.737	54.67	33.33	10.67	1.33
Relationship with your potential college position coach(es)	2.40	.799	57.14	28.57	11.69	2.60
Degree programs and academic courses offered	2.37	.709	50.00	36.84	13.16	0.00
Playing in front of large crowds and/or a sold-out stadium	2.34	.841	53.33	33.33	8.00	5.33
Opportunity to win a national championship	2.33	.811	52.00	32.00	13.33	2.67
Increased chances of playing professionally (ex: NFL, Canadian, Arena)	2.32	.941	56.58	26.32	9.21	7.89
Quality of the football center's facilities	2.31	.782	46.75	41.56	7.79	3.90
Location of the college (town, city, and/or state)	2.27	.853	48.05	36.36	10.39	5.19
Overall campus atmosphere and environment	2.25	.917	50.67	30.67	12.00	6.67
Opportunity to finish in the top 25 in the polls (nationally ranked) every year	2.24	.836	44.00	41.33	9.33	5.33
Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)						

Appendix F: Results of College-Choice Factor Responses (part 2 of 5)

College-Choice Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% of “Extremely Influential” (HIGH) Responses	% of “Moderately Influential” (MEDIUM) Responses	% of “Slightly Influential” (LOW) Responses	% of “Not Influential” (NONE) Responses
TV and media exposure for the college, football team, and/or conference	2.22	.805	41.56	42.86	11.69	3.90
Relationships with potential college teammates at the college	2.22	.898	46.75	35.06	11.69	6.49
Relationship with the college head coach	2.18	.839	40.26	42.86	11.69	5.19
College nightlife and social activities	2.13	.869	39.47	39.47	15.79	5.26
Academic support services and facilities at the college	2.12	.864	36.84	44.74	11.84	6.58
Brand and/or type of apparel and equipment provided to the team (ex: Nike, Adidas, Under Armour, Rawlings, Riddell, etc.)	2.12	.888	40.26	36.36	18.18	5.19
Quality of competition and/or “strength of schedule” (ex: athletic conference, non-conference games, etc.)	2.09	.747	27.27	59.74	7.79	5.19
Graduation rate of football players at the college	2.08	.834	33.33	46.67	14.67	5.33
Experience of recruiting trips (official and/or unofficial visits) to the college	2.08	.963	40.79	35.53	14.47	9.21
Quality of recruiting visits made to your hometown by the college coaches	2.07	.890	37.33	37.33	20.00	5.33
Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)						

Appendix F: Results of College-Choice Factor Responses (part 3 of 5)

College-Choice Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% of “Extremely Influential” (HIGH) Responses	% of “Moderately Influential” (MEDIUM) Responses	% of “Slightly Influential” (LOW) Responses	% of “Not Influential” (NONE) Responses
Number of professional players (ex: NFL players) associated with the college	2.07	.929	38.16	38.16	15.79	7.89
Opportunity to play immediately	2.05	.937	38.16	36.84	17.11	7.89
Athletic reputation of the football program at the college	2.05	.902	36.36	38.96	18.18	6.49
Influence from your parents/guardians	2.04	.901	35.53	39.47	18.42	6.58
Fan base and “football buzz” at the college	1.97	.822	26.67	49.33	18.67	5.33
Relationship with the college’s assistant coaches other than your position coach	1.94	.774	20.31	59.38	14.06	6.25
Quality of professors and/or academic faculty at the college	1.92	.914	28.57	44.16	18.18	9.09
Physical size of college campus	1.91	.867	26.32	44.74	22.37	6.58
Weather and/or climate at the college	1.91	.882	26.32	46.05	19.74	7.89
Style of offense or defense	1.91	1.094	39.06	28.13	17.19	15.63
Reputation of conduct and behavior of the football program at the college	1.89	.928	25.00	51.56	10.94	12.50
Male to Female ratio at the college	1.88	1.019	32.89	35.53	18.42	13.16
Quality of the college campus’ academic facilities (ex: classrooms, libraries, labs, unions, etc.)	1.84	.939	26.32	42.11	21.05	10.53
Diversity of the college’s student body and/or faculty	1.79	.991	25.97	41.56	18.18	14.29
Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)						

Appendix F: Results of College-Choice Factor Responses (part 4 of 5)

College-Choice Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% of “Extremely Influential” (HIGH) Responses	% of “Moderately Influential” (MEDIUM) Responses	% of “Slightly Influential” (LOW) Responses	% of “Not Influential” (NONE) Responses
Quality of student-athlete development programs and activities	1.78	.903	23.68	38.16	30.26	7.89
Quality of practice facilities (indoor and/or outdoor)	1.75	.948	23.38	40.26	24.68	11.69
Influence from your family members other than your parents/guardians (ex: brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)	1.71	1.011	25.97	33.77	25.97	14.29
Relationship with the football team's recruiting coordinator(s)	1.71	.892	19.74	40.79	30.26	9.21
Spiritual guidance, personal faith, and/or religious programs offered	1.59	1.022	22.37	31.58	28.95	17.11
Number of students enrolled at the college	1.56	.948	17.33	36.00	32.00	14.67
Desire to attend a college close to your hometown	1.53	1.095	25.33	24.00	29.33	21.33
Quality of campus activities offered (ex: organizations, clubs, fraternities, etc.)	1.52	1.154	25.97	27.27	19.48	27.27
Influence from professors and/or academic faculty at the college	1.49	1.034	19.48	31.17	28.57	20.78
Desire to be a “superstar” on the football team	1.49	1.084	23.38	24.68	29.87	22.08
Bowl game appearances in the last 5 years	1.45	1.063	18.42	32.89	23.68	25.00
Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)						

Appendix F: Results of College-Choice Factor Responses (part 5 of 5)

College-Choice Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% of “Extremely Influential” (HIGH) Responses	% of “Moderately Influential” (MEDIUM) Responses	% of “Slightly Influential” (LOW) Responses	% of “Not Influential” (NONE) Responses
Recruiting materials you received from the football team (ex: media guides, letters, etc.)	1.44	.966	16.88	27.27	38.96	16.88
Availability of your desired jersey number on the football team	1.34	1.126	19.74	26.32	22.37	31.58
Influence from your high school coach(es)	1.30	1.046	14.47	30.26	26.32	28.95
Influence from your friends	1.30	.947	9.09	36.36	29.87	24.68
College housing options offered	1.25	1.047	14.47	26.32	28.95	30.26
Influence from other recruits	1.20	.986	9.33	32.00	28.00	30.67
Relationship with the athletic director and/or college athletic department administration	1.19	1.030	11.11	30.16	25.40	33.33
Influence from your high school teammates	1.14	1.016	11.84	23.68	31.58	32.89
Student to teacher ratio at the college	1.08	.997	7.81	29.69	25.00	37.50
Influence from your high school teachers and/or guidance counselor(s)	1.03	.971	8.22	23.29	31.51	36.99
Desire to attend a college far away from your hometown	1.01	.951	8.00	21.33	34.67	36.00
Note. The scale ranged from “Not Influential” (0) to “Extremely Influential” (3)						

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